

Exploring Constraints to Student Attendance at FBS Non-Autonomous Football Games

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ABSTRACT

The need to attract fans is an important element of any successful sport organization (Koo et al., 2017). Despite this fact, NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision game attendance has trended on a decline for the last decade, including rates of student attendance (Cohen, 2013; “NCAA Football Attendance,” n. d.). While these trends should be concerning to intercollegiate athletic departments across the country, they should be particularly troubling to schools participating in football that represent non-autonomous conferences, more commonly known as the Group of Five. This subsection of college athletic programs do not have the luxury of the lucrative revenue streams available to their autonomous, Power Five counterparts, such as media rights for broadcasting games (Dosh, 2013), raising the importance of ticket sales to their budgets. College students are specifically important to both the current and long-term prospects of non-autonomous athletic departments since this group traditionally makes up the base of future donors and season ticket holders (Novy-Williams, 2017; Tracy, 2016).

When individuals make decisions such as whether or not to attend athletic events, they must consider motivations that may drive their decision-making, while also considering constraints that may inhibit their willingness to attend a particular athletic contest. This study sought to evaluate for various constraints by deploying a survey to students at four non-autonomous FBS institutions. This study considered the foundational work in the area of leisure constraints written by Crawford and Godbey (1987) and modeled the survey instrument after the work of Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) with the creation of their Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints (HMLC), as well as more recent iterations pertaining to sport spectatorship.

Overall, seven constraint categories were identified at the completion of an exploratory factor analysis that were shown to constrain student attendance at home football games. These

seven categories were also evaluated across various demographic characteristics for significant differences. This research hopes to provide a base for future research on student attendance, as well as to establish a version of the HMLC that applies specifically to sport spectator attendance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One Introduction and General Information	1
College Football and Game Attendance	1
Autonomy and the Existing Divide.....	2
Study Population	4
Purpose & Rationale	5
Goals of the study	5
Data Collection	6
Previewing the Literature Review	7
Chapter Two Literature Review.....	8
The Non-Autonomous Schools.....	8
American Athletic Conference	8
Conference-USA.....	12
Mid-American Conference	14
Mountain West Conference	16
Sun Belt Conference	17
The General Importance of Football Attendance and the 15,000 Rule	19
Getting Creative.....	20
Revenue Threats and a Look to the Future	21
Motivations	22
An Overview of Motivation Theory	23
Motivating Factors Impacting Sport Spectator Decisions	24
Sloan’s (1989) Sport Spectator Motives	25
Wann’s (1995) Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS)	25
Trail and James’ (2001) Motivations Scale for Sport Consumption	26
Other Scales and the Importance of Categorization	27
Categorizing Motives of the Sport Consumer	27
Psychological Motives.....	28
Sociocultural Motives	31
Subcultural Identification of Sport Fans	33
The Subculture of College Football Fans	33
College Students in Motivations Research	34
Emotional Attachment	35
Emotional Attachment in Sport	37
The Psychological Continuum Model (PCM)	39
Market Segmentation and Fan Passion	41
A Final Word on Motivations and Emotional Attachment	45
Consumer Constraints.....	46
A Background on Leisure Constraints Research	46
The Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints.....	48
The Limited Use of the Leisure Constraints Model in Sport Disciplines	49
Incorporating the HMLC Into This Study	51
A “Westernization” of the Leisure Constraints Model	52
Segmentation and Identity of Students Attending American Universities	53
Similarities and Differences to Previous Studies	54

Criticisms and Shortcomings of LCT and the HMLC	57
Constraint Negotiations	61
Constraint Negotiations in Student Sport Consumers	64
Modifying the Leisure Constraints Model	71
Filling the Gaps in the Literature	73
The Practical Impact of This Study	75
Chapter Three Materials and Methods.....	77
Section Overview	77
Survey as a Method of Data Collection	77
Methods of Survey Delivery	79
Survey Methodology and this Study	81
Sampling Technique	83
Internet Surveys and the College Student Demographic	85
Instrumentation	86
Addressing Intrapersonal Constraints	87
Addressing Allegiance to Another Team.....	88
Addressing Interpersonal Constraints	89
Addressing Structural Constraints	89
Addressing At-home Viewing	91
Demographic Questions.....	91
Research Questions	92
Chapter Four Results.....	95
Instrument Deployment and Data Analysis	95
Addressing RQ1.....	95
Reliability.....	98
Addressing RQ2.....	99
Addressing RQ3.....	99
Addressing RQ4.....	100
Chapter Five Discussion and Conclusion	101
Chapter Overview	101
A Discussion of Factors in this Study	102
A New Adaption to the Leisure Constraints Model.....	107
Implications and Recommendations	108
The Seriousness of Attendance Reductions	109
Is Football Worth It?	110
Managerial Recommendations.....	112
Limitations and Future Research	115
Conclusion	117
List of References	119
Appendix.....	149
Vita.....	165

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Factor loadings for EFA of Constraints to Student Attendance	159
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Responses	161
Table 3. Factor Means by Gender	162
Table 4. Correlations between Scales and Academic Class	163
Table 5. Factor Means by Game Attendance	164

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) (Funk & James, 2001)	154
Figure 2. Crawford et al. (1991) Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints.....	155
Figure 3. Leisure constraints model for sport spectator attendance (Pre-analysis)	156
Figure 4. Leisure constraints model for sport spectator attendance (Post-analysis).....	157
Figure 5. Factor Eigenvalues	158

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

College Football and Game Attendance

Over time, the production of college sporting events has become an increasingly expensive enterprise for American colleges and universities (Koo & Hardin, 2008). Additionally, the need to attract fans to attend these events remains a critical component to the success of any sport organization (Koo, Hardin, & Shoffner, 2017). However, recent attendance patterns at NCAA football games have struggled to keep up with these higher production costs. NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) football attendance has largely trended on a decline over the past decade (“NCAA Football Attendance,” n. d.). Within that time period, FBS attendance has declined by nearly 1.5 million fans nationwide since an all-time-high in 2013, and in 2018 attendance declined for the seventh time in an eight-year span, reaching its lowest average mark since 1996 (Dodd, 2019).

These reported numbers do not reveal the whole story. It has also been discovered that paid attendance and physical attendance numbers are often dissimilar (Brown, 2011). For example, Bachman (2018) determined that the number of fans who attend NCAA football games hosted by major programs is roughly 71% of the announced attendance, while less prominent programs scan tickets for around 45% of their announced total crowd. The University of Louisiana-Monroe, a non-autonomous member of the Sun Belt Conference who announced a total attendance figure for their five 2017 home games at a combined 49,640, scanned only 13,302 tickets for those games. These figures represent that only 26% of the announced attendees were physically at their games (Rhea, 2018). Announced attendance figures may also be inflated

to include stadium workers, security personnel, ushers, and concessions employees (Malcolm, 2018), or by the sale of large seating areas to corporations or organizations that do not attend, leading to thousands of empty seats that are paid for, but not used (Brown, 2011). Therefore, the aforementioned documented NCAA football attendance reductions in the last decade may not paint a complete picture of this issue, as those reported figures are often exaggerated.

These attendance trends point towards reductions in collectable ticket revenue by FBS-participating intercollegiate athletic departments. These declines may have the potential to impact the athletic budgets of even the most powerful entities in FBS college football. Much of the attention surrounding college football is given to the autonomous, or Power Five conferences (Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big XII Conference, Pacific-12 Conference, and Southeastern Conference) and their member schools. However, there exist five additional conferences whose members participate in FBS football that struggle to compete with autonomous program budgets and who already face challenges from a revenue standpoint (USA Today, 2019). The schools representing these non-autonomous, or Group of Five conferences (American Athletic Conference, Conference-USA, Mid-American Conference, Mountain West Conference, Sun Belt Conference) may be susceptible to greater issues related to ticket-related declines in revenue. These programs would seldom be characterized as major programs across the college football landscape, but like their Power Five counterparts, seek to compete at college football's highest level.

Autonomy & The Existing Divide

In major college football, autonomy is a term that allows the Power Five conferences the agency to submit their own legislation for the passing of new rules and regulations amongst themselves as a separate group from other football-playing members of Division I; initiatives

that are often quite costly to the athletic departments involved (Bennett, 2014). Examples of recent rule creations include cost-of-attendance stipends being issued to student-athletes and the guarantee of four-year athletic scholarships (Bennett, 2014).

However, not all FBS institutions are willing nor able to comply with these initiatives. As a representation of the financial divide between schools within the Power Five and Group of Five conferences, on a list outlining the financial profiles of 230 public NCAA athletic departments, the top-performing non-autonomous department, the University of Connecticut (UConn) of the American Athletic Conference, ranked 52nd overall in total revenue, ahead of only one school representing an autonomous conference (USA Today, 2019). The top 51 public institutions in athletics revenue all reside within the Power Five conferences and do so with considerably less dependence on financial support in the form of student fees or other financial allocations provided directly from their university administrations (USA Today, 2019). Due to these revenue challenges, non-autonomous athletic departments often do not have the financial means to fully participate in autonomous initiatives and rule creations, perpetuating a substantial wealth gap and two distinct classifications of FBS member institutions (Bennett, 2014).

Drawing attendees remains a concern of athletic staffs across all of college football, however non-autonomous schools have recently been subject to some particularly disturbing attendance challenges. For example, Dodd (2019) revealed that two non-autonomous conferences; Conference-USA (C-USA) and the Mountain West Conference (MWC), posted the lowest attendance averages in their respective histories during the 2018 football season. Unlike their autonomous counterparts, the non-autonomous conferences also do not have lucrative media rights contracts, or contracts negotiated with television networks to broadcast games featuring conference members. These contracts produce massive revenues for the Power Five

conferences that are then proportionally distributed to their member schools (Dosh, 2013). As attendance numbers decline, these agreements may allow autonomous athletic departments to soften the blow of reductions in ticket and associated revenue streams, such as parking and concessions revenue (Eaton-Robb, 2019). For example, the Big Ten Conference recorded \$759M in revenue for the fiscal year 2018, including distributions of roughly \$54M to its full member schools (Berkowitz, 2019). Much of this revenue can be attributed to the conference's record-breaking media right contract through which ESPN and FOX Sports will pay \$2.64B over six years (Greenstein, 2017). The non-autonomous conference members are not so fortunate and feature media rights contracts that pale in comparison to the autonomous leagues, causing the potential for greater budgetary issues coinciding with attendance reductions, including potential reductions in depended-upon donations from their alumni (Novy-Williams, 2017). Specifics regarding financial terms of media rights contracts for the non-autonomous conferences are outlined in detail in Chapter Two.

Study Population

College football fans and potential event attendees come from a variety to backgrounds; this study focuses on one particular group from that audience: the students attending non-autonomous FBS institutions. However, current attendance trends should be concerning regardless of the size and scope of the athletic department being discussed. Student attendance has been identified as important to this study and to the future of college athletics since current students are thought to represent the foundation for their future profitability (Fulks, 2014; Koo, Hardin, & Shoffner, 2017). This group is composed of future ticket purchasers who may evolve into donors who are more likely to donate to athletic programs than general university funds (Jaschik, 2012; New, 2014). In addition to the declines in overall attendance, there have also

been reductions in average student attendance figures at college football games across the nation (Cohen, 2014; New, 2014; Simmons, Popp, McEvoy, & Howell, 2018). As a result, it may be important for marketers of college athletics to understand the constraints that prevent students from attending games.

Purpose & Rationale

The purpose of this study is to examine constraints that may impact student football attendance at NCAA Division I – Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) non-autonomous institutions. The ramifications of constraints on student attendance may be of heightened importance at the non-autonomous level, as these conferences represent the bottom-five conferences in overall attendance of the ten FBS conferences (“NCAA Football Attendance, n.d.). Therefore, it has become increasingly important for non-autonomous athletic departments to find a way to drive attendance to provide financial support through ticket sales to promote department functionality and viability. Despite recent and daunting attendance reductions, the long-term financial viability of college athletics may also lie with this group. Current college students are considered by marketers to represent future groups of donors and season ticket holders (Novy-Williams, 2017; Tracy, 2016), adding additional importance on understanding how the intensity of constraints may impact these attendance behaviors of these individuals.

Goals of This Study

This study seeks to utilize and expand upon both sport spectator motivation literature and the existing hierarchical leisure constraint model to evaluate college students and their rationale for attending or not attending football games. Over time, the motives of sport spectators have been examined in a variety of ways. However, sport spectator motives remain both intricate and

challenging to identify (Daniell, 2013), prompting the completion of numerous studies that have attempted to do so. Specifics regarding these studies are outlined in Chapter Two.

Conversely, the defined goal of leisure constraints research is to “investigate factors that are assumed by researchers and/or perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and/or to inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure (Jackson, 2000, p. 62). In this study, attending non-autonomous football games is considered leisure. Leisure constraint studies have established that preferences for leisure activities and constraints that may serve to prevent or deter participation are not universal across all leisure participants and may vary based on the individual. This study seeks to increase understanding of previously identified concepts and constraints while also introducing several underexplored elements from existing literature, such as the impact of allegiance to another team, the impact of the at-home viewing experience, and the impact of in-stadium technology issues on college student attendance. More information regarding constraints is discussed in-depth in Chapter Two.

Data Collection

Data was collected via an online questionnaire that was shared with four participating non-autonomous athletic departments who feature a football program. Upon receipt of the instrument via a webpage link, these departments facilitated its distribution to their respective student bodies. Survey questions were adapted from previous literature concerning college student athletic event attendance and were designed to assess motives and constraints to home football game attendance that may be considered by students when evaluating their decisions whether or not to attend. More details regarding instrumentation and survey design will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Previewing the Literature Review

The following chapter will provide a review of relevant literature, beginning with a profile and brief history of each non-autonomous conference. Next, consumer motivations literature will be discussed, including relevant literature concerning spectator and fan motivations in a sport setting. Finally, there will be a discussion of Leisure Constraint Theory (LCT), the Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints (HMLC), and adaptations of the model that this study seeks to contribute to the current body of knowledge.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Non-Autonomous Schools

Prior to discussions regarding applicable theories or models that impact the non-autonomous conferences and their member schools, it is important to identify who they are. The 60 non-autonomous institutions who participate in FBS football competition make up roughly 46% of the 130 total FBS members. These conferences also offer several additional sports in addition to their football programs. Therefore, it is important to understand their place within the landscape of college football and intercollegiate athletics. This section includes a) a brief history and background of each conference, including any distinct characteristics of conferences or member schools, b) current media rights and exposure opportunities for conference schools, c) attendance figures and stadium capacities, and d) a student enrollment range across each conference.

American Athletic Conference (AAC)

Background

The AAC was founded in 2013 in the wake from the fallout of the former Big East Conference, which had existed since May 1979 (bigeast.com, 2019). At its inception, the AAC featured 10 members, but in 2015 the league reached its peak of 12 football-playing members split into two divisions. (University of Central Florida, University of Cincinnati, University of Connecticut, East Carolina University, University of Houston, University of Memphis, U.S. Naval Academy, University of South Florida, Southern Methodist University, Temple University, Tulane University, University of Tulsa) (McMurphy, 2013, theAmerican.org, 2019).

The student-athletes participating at AAC-member schools represent the conference in athletic competition across 22 sponsored sports (theAmerican.org, 2019).

However, AAC reorganization looms on the horizon. UConn has recently agreed in principal to join a new iteration of the Big East Conference. The move has been cited as protection for the future of UConn's men's and women's basketball programs by renewing storied rivalries in their most prominent sports but will likely also mean their departure from the AAC as a football-playing member (Brechlin, 2019). This will leave UConn without a defined conference for their football program to compete in and the AAC with a potential slot to fill. The Big East Conference has maintained a presence in NCAA basketball competition, but the conference previously ceased football competition as the result of both several years of conference realignment and differing views between its football-playing and non-football-playing member schools. (Augustyn, 2018; Lariviere, 2012). UConn hopes to begin competing in a new conference as soon as July 2020; however, it must first pay an exit fee to the AAC, as well as a \$3.5M entrance fee to join the Big East (Brechlin, 2019). The possibility also remains that UConn will operate independent of any conference in football for the 2020 season.

Media Rights, Revenues, and Exposure Opportunities

The AAC currently holds media rights contracts with ESPN and CBS but has reached agreement with ESPN on a new 12-year, \$1B media rights deal set to begin in 2020. This new deal will provide roughly an additional \$5M per member school in annual revenue (Smith & Ourand, 2019). The conference holds primary or secondary partnerships with nine bowl games for the 2019 season, thus “ensuring multiple annual matchups against the nation's top conferences and providing desirable postseason destinations to member institutions” (theAmerican.org, 2019). On the playing surface, AAC representatives have boasted impressive

representation in the prominent “New Year’s Six” bowl games, supporting claims that AAC members can compete on the field with the best programs in the nation. For example, the University of Central Florida (UCF) claimed a share of the 2017 college football national championship after an undefeated season despite not being invited to participate in the College Football Playoff (CFP) – the four-team tournament conventionally used to select college football’s champion (Heim, 2018). All four universities who were invited to participate in the CFP in 2017 represented autonomous conferences. Considering that three of the four universities who qualified (Clemson University, University of Washington, Ohio State University) did so despite suffering losses during their respective seasons, this may represent how non-autonomous conference schools are viewed across the college football landscape, alluding to challenges non-autonomous institutions may face to earn national respect.

The AAC has sought to capitalize on these recent successes, armed with the ammunition of the new lucrative media rights contract that separates them from their non-autonomous brethren. The AAC has also pushed the narrative that the conference is actually part of the “Power Six” conferences; a play on the existing and recognized five autonomous conferences plus the AAC (Johnson, 2017). These initiatives have been spearheaded by conference commissioner Mike Aresco. In addition to their aforementioned on-field successes, Aresco notes that AAC members pay cost-of-attendance stipends to student-athletes; an initiative passed as autonomous legislation that has also been adopted by AAC member institutions (Knight, 2018). Aresco also notes similar TV exposure for AAC members to that of Power Five schools, as well as AAC teams faring well against autonomous opponents in recent athletic competition (Knight, 2018). The league’s members have placed “P6” decals on the helmets of their football programs (representing “Power Six”), featured prominent “P6” imagery at its annual conference media

day, and features the hashtag “#AmericanPow6r” on its Twitter page in attempts to further the initiative (Johnson, 2017).

These claims have been met with skepticism not just from autonomous athletic programs, but from athletic administrators representing members of other non-autonomous football conferences. Sean Frazier, the athletic director of Northern Illinois University whose football program is a member of the non-autonomous Mid-American Conference (MAC), claimed that the Power Six campaign of the AAC marginalizes the rest of the non-autonomous conferences in their mutual struggle for national relevance (Dodd, 2018). A review of the recent finances of AAC member athletic departments also generates skepticism regarding the true existence of a P6. For example, for the 2016-17 season, the AAC reported revenues of \$74.5 million, down 6% from 2015-16 and almost \$300 million less than the Big XII Conference; the lowest-earning autonomous conference (Murschel, 2018b). Some of these deficiencies may be offset with the rollout of their new media rights contract in 2020, but this demonstrates that while AAC-members may be able to compete with autonomous schools on the playing field, financially, they do not operate in the same ballpark.

Attendance Figures and Stadium Capacities

In 2018, the AAC ranked sixth out of 10 FBS conferences in attendance at conference games with an average of 28,902 attendees per game (“NCAA Football Attendance”, n. d.). Conference attendance will be a metric used frequently throughout this section and signifies home and neutral site games involving two teams representing the same athletic conference (“NCAA Football Attendance”, n. d.). These attendance numbers represent modest gains from 2017, but it is important to note that no non-autonomous institution ranks in the top-30 in home attendance nationwide, including members of the AAC (“NCAA Football Attendance”, n. d.).

Stadium seating capacity should also be considered in a study concerned with attendance trends. The average seating capacity at home venues for AAC football members is roughly 45,000, ranging from Tulane University's Yulman Stadium (30,000) to Lincoln Financial Field (68,532), home of the National Football League's Philadelphia Eagles and the AAC's Temple University Owls football program (collegegridirons.com, 2019). Attendance figures issued by the NCAA (n. d.) indicate that on average, over 16,000 seats are reported empty for each AAC conference game.

Student Enrollment

Since students are the population being examined by this study, student enrollment at member schools is an important consideration when considering attendance rates. Similar to their stadium seating capacities, conference-member student enrollment numbers are quite diverse across conference members, ranging from a low of 4,412 (University of Tulsa) to a high of 68,571 (University of Central Florida) (ucf.edu, 2019; utulsa.edu, 2019).

Conference-USA (C-USA)

Background

C-USA debuted as a conference in 1995 and is celebrating its 25th anniversary throughout the 2019-20 athletic year (conferenceusa.com, 2019a). The conference was largely formed by a merger of the former Metro and Great Midwest Conferences; two Division-I conferences that did not sponsor football at the time of C-USA formation (Stewart, 2004). Upon its creation, C-USA had only six football-playing members, expanding over time to feature 12 football schools by the 2005 season after an impactful round of NCAA realignment. In this context, realignment can be defined as a periodic reorganization of conference affiliations among NCAA Division I schools (conferenceusa.com, 2019a).

Presently, C-USA has 14 football-playing members split into two divisions, representing 10 states and a combined area population of over 30 million (University of Alabama at Birmingham, Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, Louisiana Tech University, Marshall University, Middle Tennessee State University, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of North Texas, Old Dominion University, Rice University, University of Southern Mississippi, University of Texas at El Paso, University of Texas at San Antonio, Western Kentucky University) (conferenceusa.com, 2019a). Student-athletes from member institutions represent the conference across 19 total NCAA sports (conferenceusa.com, 2019).

Media Rights, Revenues, and Exposure Opportunities

C-USA has seven primary or secondary bowl game affiliations for the 2019-20 season (conferenceusa.com, 2019). League members have earned 106 bowl bids over the lifetime of the conference, and conference members are eligible for the CFP, though a representative has yet to appear (conferenceusa.com, 2019). In 2018, C-USA entered into a new media rights contract with CBS Sports, Stadium, and Facebook (conferenceusa.com, 2018), the revenue from which helped to boost conference-member revenue disbursements from a reported \$200,000 per school to roughly \$400,000 (Vito, 2018). The conference has also entered into a rights deal with the NFL Network for the 2019 season in an attempt to further exposure and generate additional income (Vannini, 2019a). While this represents an improvement, C-USA still lags behind each autonomous conference's media rights revenue by a significant margin. From an overall revenue standpoint, Old Dominion University was the conference's strongest performer for the 2017-18 season, ranking 71st in athletic revenue out of 230 public NCAA Division I institutions and behind every member of the Power Five conferences (USA Today, 2019).

Attendance Figures and Stadium Capacities

For the 2018 football season, C-USA ranked eighth out of 10 FBS conferences in conference attendance with an average of 18,874 reported attendees per contest, declining from 2017 at an average rate of 374 attendees-per-game (“NCAA Football Attendance”, n. d.). The average C-USA football facility holds roughly 36,000 attendees (collegegridirons.com, 2019), meaning that on average, their stadiums sit nearly half-empty on game days. However, there are great differences in facility capacities across conference members, ranging from UNC-Charlotte’s Jerry Richardson Stadium (15,300) to the University of Alabama at Birmingham’s Legion Field (71,594) (collegegridirons.com, 2019).

Student Enrollment

Conference members also demonstrate a vast range in student enrollment, from Rice University’s reported 7,022 to Florida International University’s 56,851 (conferenceusa.com, 2019b).

Mid-American Conference (MAC)

Background

The MAC will enter its 74th year of service in 2019-20 since its inception in 1946 (getsomemaction.com, 2019). The league has expanded from five charter members in the 1940’s to 12 present football-playing members representing states across the Great Lakes region of the United States that are split into two divisions (University of Akron, Ball State University, Bowling Green State University, State University of New York at Buffalo, Central Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Kent State University, Miami University, Northern Illinois University, Ohio University, University of Toledo, Western Michigan University)

(getsomemaction.com, 2019). MAC student-athletes represent the conference across 23 sponsored sports (getsomemaction.com, 2019).

Media Rights, Revenues, and Exposure Opportunities

MAC members have played in two “New Year’s Six” bowl games, most recently in 2017. Like all non-autonomous members, MAC schools have an opportunity to participate in the CFP if a member qualifies (getsomemaction.com, 2019). MAC member schools are guaranteed a minimum of five placements in bowl games, including long-term primary contracts with the Dollar General Bowl and the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl (getsomemaction.com, 2019). In 2014, the MAC entered into a 13-year extension of their current media rights deal with ESPN, providing ESPN exclusive television and digital distribution rights of MAC sports, including guaranteed ESPN coverage of every MAC football game (getsomemaction.com, 2019). Conference revenue distributions from this deal have been documented at \$830,000 and above (Hopkins & Keilman, 2015). However, for the 2017-18 season, Buffalo ranked 74th out of 230 public NCAA Division I institutions as the highest-ranking member of the conference in total revenue (USA Today, 2019). Like the leading revenue producer in each non-autonomous conference, this ranks behind each Power Five-member school.

Attendance Figures and Stadium Capacities

In 2018, the MAC ranked tenth out of the 10 FBS conferences in conference attendance, averaging 15,458 attendees per game (“NCAA Football Attendance”, n. d.). Unlike the other non-autonomous conferences, MAC conference members all feature relatively similar stadium seating capacities, ranging from Ball State University’s Schuemann Stadium (22,500) to Central Michigan University’s Kelly/Shorts Stadium (32,855) (collegegridirons.com, 2019). However,

with an average capacity of nearly 27,000 seats, over 40% of seats remain empty on the average MAC football game day.

Student Enrollment

The conference also has less diversity in student enrollment numbers than the AAC or C-USA, ranging from Bowling Green State University's 17,644 to the State University of New York at Buffalo's 30,184 (Grove, 2019).

Mountain West Conference (MWC)

Background

The MWC was founded in 1999 with eight charter members (themw.com, 2019b), seven of whom had been longtime members of the Western Athletic Conference. The league currently features 12 football-playing members split into two divisions that span across several of the western United States (United States Air Force Academy, Boise State University, California State University-Fresno, Colorado State University, University of Hawaii at Manoa, University of Nevada-Reno, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, University of New Mexico, San Diego State University, San Jose State University, Utah State University, University of Wyoming) (themw.com, 2019d). The MWC sponsors 18 sports in which its student-athletes participate (theMW.com, 2019d).

Media Rights, Revenues, and Exposure Opportunities

The MWC has agreements with eight bowl games, including five guaranteed slots for its members (theMW.com, 2019a). Similar to the other non-autonomous conferences, MWC members have yet to represent the non-autonomous conferences in the CFP, but have historically placed teams in the prominent Fiesta, Rose, and Sugar Bowl games (theMW.com, 2019a). The MWC was also the first conference to create and dedicate a sport television network to their

intercollegiate athletics (theMW.com, 2019c), acting as a precursor to today's ACC, SEC, Big Ten, and Pac-12 networks that are utilized by the Power Five conferences. However, the network is no longer active, resigning the MWC to its media rights contracts with ESPN and AT&T SportsNet. These contracts are largely responsible for a roughly \$1.1M payout per school in conference revenue distribution (Anderson, 2018; Zeigler, 2019). In 2017-18, the United States Air Force Academy was the most successful conference member from an athletics revenue standpoint, ranking 56th out of 230 public NCAA Division I athletic departments. This, again, ranks behind each Power Five athletic program (USA Today, 2019).

Attendance Figures and Stadium Capacities

For the 2018 football season, the MWC ranked seventh out of 10 FBS conferences in conference attendance, averaging 23,862 attendees per contest and representing a reduction of 1,101 per game from 2017 ("NCAA Football Attendance", n. d.). Stadium capacities are diverse across the conference, ranging from Utah State University's Maverick Stadium at 25,513 to San Diego State University's 54,000-seat SDCCU Stadium (collegegridirons.com, 2019). With an average capacity of over 38,000 seats across the conference, on average there are nearly 15,000 empty seats at MWC football contests.

Student Enrollment

Student enrollment numbers at MWC member schools represent a wide range, from Air Force at 4,400 to San Diego State at 33,778 (theMW.com, 2019c).

Sun Belt Conference (SBC)

Background

The SBC was founded in 1976 as a non-football conference, but football became a conference-sponsored sport in 2001 (sunbeltsports.org, 2019). The conference currently has 10

football-playing members divided among two divisions with member schools residing in the southern region of the United States (Appalachian State University, Arkansas State University, Coastal Carolina University, Georgia Southern University, Georgia State University, University of Louisiana-Lafayette, University of Louisiana-Monroe, South Alabama University, Texas State University, and Troy University) (sunbeltsports.org, 2019). The SBC sponsors 18 sports in which its student-athletes participate (sunbeltsports.org, 2019).

Media Rights, Revenues, and Exposure Opportunities

The SBC has five bowl tie-ins for the 2019 season (McMurphy, 2019), while SBC-members have participated in as many as six bowl games in a season in the past (sunbeltsports.org, 2019). These opportunities represent growth for the conference since as recently as 2009, the conference had only one bowl tie-in, sending its champion to participate in the New Orleans Bowl each season (sunbeltsports.org, 2019). An SBC member has yet to participate in a CFP or New Year's Six game, but they are eligible to do so. In 2018, SBC members received roughly \$1M in conference distributions (McDonald, n. d.), including increases from an extended media rights contract with ESPN (Murschel, 2018a). For the 2017-18 season, Arkansas State University was the top-performing SBC athletic department from a revenue standpoint, ranking 74th among 230 public Division I athletics programs and behind each Power Five program (USA Today, 2019).

Attendance Figures and Stadium Capacities

For the 2018 football season, the SBC ranked ninth out of 10 FBS conferences in conference attendance, hosting an average of 17,381 at each event; a decrease of 462 patrons-per-game from the prior season ("NCAA Football Attendance", n. d.). Stadium capacities within the SBC range from Brooks Stadium at Coastal Carolina University (20,000) to Louisiana-

Lafayette's Cajun Field (41,426) (collegegridirons.com, 2019). With an average seating capacity of 30,566 in SBC stadiums, there are an average of roughly 13,000 empty seats at SBC games.

Student Enrollment

Student enrollment numbers at SBC member schools have a substantial range, from the University of Louisiana-Monroe at 9,038 to 38,808 at Texas State University (Grove, 2018).

The General Importance of Football Attendance and the 15,000 Rule

Over time, there have been numerous studies designed to evaluate spectators attendance, mostly to determine important factors and to investigate the impact of various motives on attendance behaviors within specified groups (i.e. Bernthal & Graham, 2003; Brokaw, 2000; Funk, Filo, Beaton, & Pritchard, 2009; Guerra, 2015; Hall, O'Mahony, & Viececi, 2010; Hong, 2009; Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996; Koo et al., 2017; Laviere & Arnette, 2000; Simmons et al. 2017; 2018). However, with today's bevy of sport viewing options leading to approximately 89% of a season's college football slate now viewable via television or an online stream (Rhea, 2018), additional importance should be placed on the ability to draw fans to games. In addition to the aforementioned revenue impact, all FBS NCAA football programs must also adhere to the "15,000 rule" to remain an FBS member (Vannini, 2019b). The origins of this rule can be traced to the split of Division I NCAA athletics to Division I-A and I-AA in 1978. At that time, for I-A members, an average attendance of 17,000 patrons per game and a 30,000-seat stadium were necessary to remain at the top level (Vannini, 2019b). The rule was altered in 2002 to its current form, requiring an average attendance of 15,000 per game every other year and no defined stadium capacity (Vannini, 2019b). Required adherence to this rule should be taken with a grain of salt, as there have been no documented cases of an NCAA FBS football program losing its

status as a result of non-conformity. However, it remains an important measuring stick for how proficiently athletic departments are drawing individuals to games.

For many FBS schools, getting 15,000 individuals to attend a home football game is not an issue: the members of the Power Five conferences posted per-game attendance averages of 46,442 (Pac-12) and above at conference games during the 2018 season (“NCAA Football Attendance”, n. d.). However, 14 schools from non-autonomous conferences posted average attendance figures below 15,000 for 2018, including MAC-champion Northern Illinois University, indicating that even winning non-autonomous programs may struggle to overcome this challenge (“NCAA Football Attendance”, n. d.; Vannini, 2019b).

Getting Creative

Athletic departments have gone to great lengths in an attempt to reach the required attendance threshold. For example, Kent State University, a member of the MAC, has used money generated from their marketing contract with IMG to purchase discounted tickets from itself, while fellow MAC member Eastern Michigan University has directed Pepsi, an athletic partner, to use partnership dollars to purchase home football tickets to attempt to boost paid attendance figures (Vannini, 2019b).

There are certainly challenges that the 15,000 rule forces athletic departments to contend with, but the revenue challenges associated with non-attendance at football games, both now and in the future, may warrant the greatest attention. To focus on both time periods, UNC-Charlotte, a C-USA member, invites young alumni to take a visit to campus similar to the visits offered to football recruits, including a coach-guided tour of the university’s athletic facilities (Vannini, 2019b). This marketing tactic was designed in an attempt to gain alumni commitments to purchase tickets and tailgate packages for upcoming home football games, as students and young

alumni are considered vital to the creation of a future season-ticket and donor base (Fulks, 2014; New, 2014; Vannini, 2019b). This is an important consideration, as research indicates that when students do not attend football games while enrolled in college, they are less likely to donate money to their institutions post-graduation, which has the potential to impact the bottom-line of athletic departments for years to come (Novy-Williams, 2017).

Revenue Threats and a Look to the Future

While autonomous schools have had no issue reaching the required attendance threshold, in 2018, Big Ten attendance was at its lowest point since 1993; the SEC at its lowest since 2003 (Vannini, 2019b). However, finances for even the most powerful programs in college football demonstrate the importance of protecting revenue streams associated with attendance. As an example of the impact of ticket sales and donations, Texas A&M University, an SEC-autonomous institution and the top-grossing NCAA athletic department in 2016-17, earned \$260M in alumni contributions from 2014-2016, directing \$119M of that total directly to their football operations (Smith, 2018). Texas A&M also added roughly an additional \$41M in ticket revenues each season during that window of time (Smith, 2018). Attendance declines, especially those by students, have the potential to threaten these revenue streams over time, putting the current nature of intercollegiate sport in a state of questionable longevity.

The non-autonomous conferences and their schools may be more susceptible to current and future financial challenges than revenue-producing goliaths like the SEC or Texas A&M. UConn, the top-grossing non-autonomous representative for 2017-18, reported roughly \$9.1M in ticket sales and \$2.7M in alumni contributions, numbers that cannot compete with many of the nation's autonomous institutions (USA Today, 2019). If empty seats in student sections will truly have an impact on future ticket sales and alumni contributions, these numbers may decline

further, potentially widening the gap between the Power Five and Group of Five to unprecedented levels.

Motivations

To address attendance figures and the current financial gap in FBS football, it may be important to understand the motivations of students attending non-autonomous institutions who are making the decision to attend or to not attend college football games. Motivations have impacted various facets of human behavior for centuries and have been examined through a variety of frameworks, scales and continuums. Sports “probably have their origin in the human need to master the world” (Dichter, 1964; p. 252) and the motivations driving sport consumer behaviors have been a consideration for decades. There has also been a rise over time in the sheer number of sporting events that take place, creating an element of competition for attendee attention. These changes have prompted many event organizers to try to identify reasons that individuals choose to attend sporting events in an effort to determine how these events should be marketed (Assaker, Vinzi, & O’Connor, 2011; Kirkup & Sutherland, 2017).

As a result, sport spectator motivation has been observed through a number of diverse paradigms of sport motivation theory, such as Sloan’s (1989) profile of psychological needs, Wann’s (1995) Sports Fan Motivation Scale, and Trail and James’ (2001) Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption, among others. This diverse array of paradigmatic approaches illustrates the challenges associated with effectively identifying the motivations of sport spectators to consume sport product or attend sporting events. These challenges have led to the creation of various scales seeking to measure sport consumption motives. These scales will be discussed in additional detail later in this chapter.

An Overview of Motivation Theory

The study of motivations has a long history dating back to the psychoanalytic studies of Dichter (1964) on consumer motivations undertaken in the 1950's and 1960's. Motivation theory has not remained static in nature, instead evolving over time. Motivation theories have moved away from a heavy biological focus to more complex analyses based on social-cognitive factors such as behaviors and emotions. This can be illustrated by a theoretical evolution over time from instinct theories that are thought to have played a role in determining the survival of a species (McDougall, 1908) to the development of considerations of the total brand experience for products and the marketing of goods and services (Pincus, 2004).

Motivation theory can be described as a compromise of influential internal factors that stimulate an individual's behavior with the goal of securing personal satisfaction (Murray, 1964). These motivations refer to the processes that energize and direct purposeful behavior (Hebb, 1955) and provide the rationale for behavior (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). When these motivations manifest themselves in the minds of consumers, they have the power to ultimately “determine what people want to do or want to have, and the extent to which they want to do it or have it” (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005, p. 23). At a foundational level, the constant self-evaluation undertaken by consumers denotes a process of determining internal psychological needs, wants and goals that have the potential to cause internal psychological tension if left unfulfilled (Fondness, 1994; Lewin, 1951; Pincus, 2004). These tensions are often released through behaviors that are designed to satisfy the needs of the individual (Lewin, 1951). The determination that motivations occur as a result of unmet needs has remained consistent throughout its history (Pincus, 2004), yet motivation theory has been subject to a number of paradigmatic changes as the value of different needs have evolved over time. For example,

Maslow (1954) determined that a hierarchy of needs exists that determines the actions of individuals. An individual must first fulfill physiological needs before moving on to needs regarding safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and a need for self-actualization (Brooker, 1975; Maslow, 1954). Unsatisfied needs at a lower level must be met before higher-level needs can emerge, and the present needs of an individual are thought to be determined by the level of satisfaction of their more basic needs (Brooker, 1975).

These changes have been due to factors such as changes in the societal hierarchy of needs as material needs become more easily fulfilled, allowing other needs to become more prominent (Brooker, 1975; Maslow, 1954). Additionally, the study of factors such as group influence and their impact on brand decisions have caused shifts in understanding related to consumer behavior and motivations (Park & Lessig, 1977). These motivations have the power to impact a group central to this study: college students attending institutions with an FBS football team that represents a non-autonomous conference. Determining what motivates this group, as well as how these motivations may impact their home football game attendance behaviors is of particular importance to this study. However, it is also important to understand factors impacting sport spectators, generally.

Motivating Factors Impacting Sport Spectator Decisions

For the purposes of this study, sport spectators are considered to be individuals who watch an event or game ("Spectator", n. d). This study focuses on decisions of whether or not to attend sporting events, an important designation since emerging technologies have made it easier than ever to consume sport, making them available for viewing in an ever-increasing number of ways (Larkin, Fink, & Trail, 2015; Luker, 2012). Dichter (1964) indicated that the marketing and advertising of leisure-time activities is important on a societal level. Attending sporting events is

one such activity, and spectator motives have been shown to exist as a result of the continued social and psychological needs of consumers (Koo & Hardin, 2008; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000; Trail, Robinson, Dick, & Gillentine, 2003).

Attendance at sporting events also represents a significant revenue stream for sport organizations and event venues that frequently offer subsequent economic payoffs for cities and regions, including college campuses (Hall, O'Mahony, & Vieceli, 2010). Therefore, it is important for sport organizations to both identify and capitalize on opportunities to make their product as attractive as possible to prospective attendees. The last 30 years of research has demonstrated the existence of a number of factors involved in the process of understanding sport spectators and have evaluated variables across a variety of contexts. Several of these efforts will be discussed in greater detail in the forthcoming subsections of this chapter.

Sloan's (1989) Sport Spectator Motives

Sloan (1989) initiated early attempts to identify sport spectator motives. It was determined that the achievement-seeking behaviors of individuals were best capable of explaining sport spectator consumption. This concept of vicarious achievement has been discussed prevalently in sport consumer literature and is defined as the self-esteem and social status gained through association with a successful athlete or sports team (Trail et al., 2000; Woo, Trail, Kwon, & Anderson, 2009). This discovery has been a reoccurring motive that has consistently appeared in subsequent studies addressing sport spectator motivations.

Wann's (1995) Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS)

Wann's (1995) scale was designed to evaluate the impact of eight motivational factors on spectator attendance at different types of sporting events. The eight factors examined included: (1) eustress, or positive stress that stimulates and energizes the individual (Branscombe & Wann,

1994; Gantz & Wenner, 1995), (2) escape, or diversion/distraction from one's day-to-day routine (Sloan, 1989), (3) entertainment, by nature of watching a sporting event unfold (Gantz & Wenner, 1995), (4) aesthetic pleasure, or the natural beauty of sport (Sloan, 1989; Smith, 1988), (5) group affiliation, or the desire to interact with other people (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Wann, Schrader & Wilson, 1999), (6) family needs, or the opportunity to spend time with family members (Gantz & Wenner, 1995), (7) economic, in the form of sports wagering/gambling (Frey, 1992; Gantz & Wenner, 1995), and (8) self-esteem, or personal enhancement or achievement (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Sloan, 1989). Results indicated that each of the eight factors that were evaluated for were positively correlated with the desire for spectators to attend events and results were replicated regardless of what sport was analyzed (Wann, 1995).

Trail and James' (2001) Motivations Scale for Sport Consumption

Through a synthesis of Wann's (1995) SFMS, the Motivations of the Sport Consumer Scale (MSCS) developed by Milne and McDonald (1999), and a scale designed by Kahle, Kambara, and Rose (1996), Trail and James (2001) created the Motivations Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC). This scale was constructed due to perceived weaknesses of past scales in content, criterion, and construct validity (Trail & James, 2001). The instrument was distributed to season ticket holders; a different population than the previously examined college student population (Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996; Wann, 1995) and the general population (Milne & McDonald, 1999). Trail and James (2001) argued for the evaluation of season ticket holders since the behavior of purchasing tickets and attending games would be inherent to this group, as they would have purchased tickets and attended games in the past.

The MSSC measured nine motivations for sport consumption: achievement, knowledge acquisition, drama, aesthetics, the skill of the athletes, the physical attraction of the athletes,

escape, family, and social interaction. The MSSC has been used and adopted to fit a number of subsequent studies that have subsequently confirmed the reliability and validity of this scale (Fink & Trail, 2002; Kim & Trail, 2010; Woo et al., 2009).

Other Scales and the Importance of Categorization

Similar to those already discussed, other scales have been developed to measure similar behavior trends relating to sport consumption, such as the Sport Fan Motivation Scale (Wann, Schrader, & Wilson, 1999), the Motivation Scale for the Consumption of Sport (McDonald, Milne, & Hong, 2002), and the Motivation Scale for Sport Online Consumption (Seo & Green, 2008). While each of these scales indicates some level of differentiation due to subtle terminology differences, these differences are considered to be minimal, rendering their findings and evaluations to be similar in nature (Daniell, 2013; Smith & Stewart, 2007). Due to these inherent similarities between scales, Daniell (2013) notes that “it therefore becomes essential to categorize these motives in order to gain a more holistic understanding of the nature of sport consumption” (p. 17).

Categorizing Motives of the Sport Consumer

It has been noted that sport spectators attend events for different reasons (Trail, Robinson, Dick & Gillentine, 2003). Research has demonstrated a need to classify these reasons, or motives, into multiple dimensions to make them easier to describe (Daniell, 2013; Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2004; Madrigal, 2006; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008). In an analysis of previous sport spectator motivations research, Smith and Stewart (2007) illustrate that previous motives in sport consumption literature can be grouped into three dimensions: (1) psychological, (2) socio-cultural, and (3) social belonging. This reduction allows for concepts to better understood within their broader contexts. For clarification, social

belonging, or group affiliation (Wann, 1995) will be discussed through the broader lens of subcultural identification within the confines of this study. The definition of subcultural identification is “an orientation of self in regard to other objects including a person or group that results in feelings or sentiments of close attachment” (Trail et al., 2010; p. 165-166); a definition that includes elements of social belonging.

Psychological Motives

Psychological motives are factors that embody the enjoyment gained by an individual from participating in an activity (Daniell, 2013; Smith & Stewart, 2007). Sport consumers attempt to fulfil their psychological needs through their sport consumption habits (i.e., attending sporting events, reading about sports). When consumers are able to meet these needs, positive feelings are developed resulting in satisfying outcomes (Laverie & Arnett, 2000), loyalty and fandom (Trail & James, 2001), game attendance (Funk, Filo, Beaton, & Pritchard, 2009) and attachment and identification with teams (Dwyer, Mudrick, Greenhalgh, LeCrom, & Drayer, 2015).

It is important to define team identification, as it appears commonly in motivations and emotional attachment literature. Wann, Melnick, Russell, and Pease (2009) define team identification as “the extent to which a fan feels psychologically connected to a team” (p. 3). Examples of some psychological motives were also present in Trail and James’ (2001) MSSC, such as aesthetics, drama, escape, and knowledge acquisition. Each will be discussed in greater detail below.

Aesthetics

Aesthetics is the perceived beauty of the act of competitive sport, combined with the possibility that a spectator may, at any time, witness exemplary moments displaying mastery and

athletic skill (Daniell, 2013; Weed & Bull, 2004). These moments are created in the eye of the beholder, but examples may include an acrobatic save from an ice hockey goaltender, a record-breaking time in a track and field event, or a long touchdown pass in a football game. It is through this artistic categorization of sport that spectators are motivated to watch, and its impact on sporting event attendance has been widely documented (Madrigal, 2006; McDonald et al., 2002; Sloan, 1989).

Drama

Drama has been defined by Fink et al. (2002) as the “need to experience pleasurable stress or stimulation” while consuming a sporting event (p. 198). Sporting events typically contain moments of eustress, which allows the consumers to feel stress in ways that are exciting (Trail & Kim, 2011). Smith and Stewart (2007) consider sport drama to be “an appealing blend of high performance, carnival, theater, emblems and noise” (p. 161). In many cases, however, the drama realized from sporting events is related most prominently to the outcome of the game or event being witnessed (Sloan, 1989).

Since every sport spectator is not the same and does not attend an event for the same reasons (Trail et al., 2003), the impact of drama can be felt differently by two separate groups of sport consumers. Sport spectators have demonstrated a heightened interest in drama when they do not consider themselves to be a fan of a particular team, university, player, or coach who is participating in a particular event (Robinson & Trail, 2005). However, fans, or spectators who exhibit these attachments to a sport, a team, or an event, are less interested in drama. The outcome of sporting events are nearly always in doubt, so highly identified spectators who consider themselves fans find less pleasure in scenarios where drama may lead their team to a loss (Trail & James, 2012). Spectators who do not consider themselves closely attached to

particular entities involved would rather witness close, exciting events that hold the possibility of offering dramatic outcomes.

Escape

Escape is a common goal of sport spectators who seek to escape the tedium or stressors of their day-to-day lives by attending a sporting event (Sloan, 1989; Wann, 1995). This escape allows individuals to separate themselves from the mundane by cheering on their favorite team or watching world-class athletes demonstrate their greatness before returning to their everyday routines. Many sport consumers consider escaping to witness a sporting event to provide psychological benefits (Fink & Trail, 2002), and the ability to escape has been determined to be a motivator for game attendance (Wann, 1995).

Knowledge Acquisition

Daniell (2013) describes knowledge acquisition as “a desire to learn about a sport, team, or players through media consumption or game attendance” (p. 20). This leads to “mavenism” or gathering information about an activity or product and the enjoyment that is felt when that knowledge is then shared with others (Billings & Ruibley, 2013). This can also lead to “Schwabism,” which is achieved by well-versed (or “know-it-all”) sport spectators on a related subject (Billings & Ruibley, 2013).

Knowledge acquisition can enrich the connection between the fan and their team, as well as the external connection between the fan and the team subculture (Fink & Trail, 2002). This identification encourages fans to become increasingly knowledgeable about their teams to demonstrate their status as true fans. True fans are individuals who are described as loyal followers of a team who are prepared to attend any event (Brokaw, 2000; Hall et al., 2010). These individuals are concerned only with the enjoyment of the event they are attending and are

in no way dissuaded from attending by factors such as the event outcome, the financial resources required to attend, social dimensions, or entertainment and demonstrate the highest degree of attendance loyalty (Brokaw, 2000; Hall et al., 2010). This development of true fans and a sport identity will be discussed further, but as frequent patrons, true fans are essential to the survival of sport organizations and venues (Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000).

Prior studies have correlated the concept of knowledge acquisition with other motives such as escape from everyday life (e.g., seeking information about sports rather than information about pricing for the replacement for a broken household appliance), social interaction (e.g., exchanging a breakdown of a favorite basketball teams' off-season with a fellow season ticketholder based on a mutual following of team-related news) and aesthetics (e.g., understanding the complexities involved in the blocking scheme on a long touchdown run that may allow for greater appreciation). Knowledge acquisition has also been associated with ticket purchasing behaviors (Madrigal, 2006), fantasy sport participation (Billings & Ruibley, 2013) and fanhood in general (Fink & Trail, 2002; Robinson & Trail, 2005).

Sociocultural Motives

Daniell (2013) states that "whether participating, spectating, or sharing experiences and knowledge with others, the function of social interaction in sport is of great importance" (p. 22). Smith and Stewart (2007) categorized family interaction, social interaction, and vicarious achievement as sociocultural motives for sport spectators.

Family Interaction

Attending a sporting event can act as a way for sport consumers to spend time with members of their family. While family motives have been demonstrated to positively impact sport spectators, some studies have demonstrated negative correlations with team identification

(Fink & Trail, 2002; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). However, in an analysis of Southeastern Conference away football game attendance, Daniell (2013) found that there was a positive, significant relationship between family and subcultural identification, indicating a drive from fans to share these attendance experiences with family. This may be due in part to the familial nature of the college football atmosphere (Daniell, 2013), which may supersede contextual factors of the game, such as strength of opponent and others (Fink & Trail, 2002).

Social Interaction

Social interaction reflects a need by sport consumers to maintain relationships with their peers or members of the sport subculture. This can impact a sport consumers' sense of belonging, or the level to which a person feels important and valued to a particular group and how that individual "fits in" (Hagerty, Williams, Coyne, & Early, 1996). Unlike family interaction, social interactions have been demonstrated to be a motivator at all levels of identification and has shown to be related to behaviors such as attending sporting events and watching them on television (Milne & McDonald, 1999).

Related to this study, the targeted demographic is college students. These students are often entrenched in a social environment surrounded by thousands of individuals from their peer group. As a result, students may be even more likely to be impacted by social interaction than others as they evaluate their motivations or constraints to attend college football games.

Vicarious Achievement

Discussed by Sloan (1989) as one of the first motivators for sport consumption, vicarious achievement continues to be a noted motivator. However, vicarious achievement may be more likely to be realized by consumers who are highly identified with a particular team or athlete than by a more general sport spectator (Trail & Anderson, 2005). This term relates to the gains in self-

esteem and social status that can be realized by sport consumers through their association with a successful athlete or team (Trail et al., 2000; Woo et al., 2009). Positive feelings, such as a sense of accomplishment when a spectators' team is victorious, have demonstrated heightened levels of event enjoyment and increased levels of support for the team (Smith & Stewart, 2007).

Subcultural Identification of Sport Fans

After considering these various motives, fans that identify with a specific team often create a subculture based on their distinct values, beliefs and attitudes (Daniell, 2013; Gelder, 2007). Through these similarities, individuals who are socialized into this sport subculture both define themselves and are defined by others as members of this group (Snelgrove, Taks, Chalip, & Green, 2008). This identification provides a sense of community and belonging (Robinson & Gammon, 2004) and can lead to increased levels of desire from these individuals to interact with others who operate within the subculture, an effect that serves as a motive that drives sporting event attendance (Branscombe & Wann, 1991).

Identification with a sports team has demonstrated to be a valuable predictor of sport consumption decisions and preferences (Trail & Anderson, 2005). This identification can impact members of the subculture by causing them to represent values held by the subculture at-large, represent their membership within the subculture, and impact sport-related behaviors (Kane, 2010). Sport subcultures also can be observed in ways such as increased levels of sport merchandise purchases, overall satisfaction, and intention to attend games or events in the future (Daniell, 2013; Fink & Trail, 2002; Hall et al., 2010).

The Subculture of College Football Fans

When discussing college football fans in particular, Kahle et al. (1996) found that the group to be primarily motivated by three factors. Similar to findings in other sport spectator

motivations research, these individuals were motivated by the possibility of participating in a unique, self-expressive experience, providing freedom from the stressors and anxiety attributed to their daily lives, particularly through elements of fantasy. This motivation may manifest in college football fans in the form of visualizing themselves on the field or basking in reflective glory (or BIRGing) and excitement. Kahle et al. (1996) also determined that the collegiate setting of football is an important contextual factor to these findings. Bernthal and Graham (2003) evaluated that in the college football setting “compliance and obligation were antecedents to comradery” (p. 225). Compliance occurs in the form of students and fans in the collegiate community yielding to group influence, or to the feeling that they need to attend sporting events on campus because there is an expectation to attend (Bernthal & Graham, 2003). Obligation implies a duty that college sports fans feel strongly about their team (Kahle et al., 1996). While these two factors do not necessarily drive a motivation to attend sporting events, their combination converges to create a sense of comradery, which is a motive that promotes spectator attendance in college football (Kahle et al., 1996). Through the dimensions of compliance, obligation, and comradery, college football fans use these motives to create a subcultural identification within which they operate.

College Students in Motivations Research

Park and Lessig (1977) determined that, “much of the experimental research conducted in psychology and consumer behavior has used college students as respondents” (p. 102). College students are considered to be a relatively tight-knit consumption community, which creates a situation where compliance and obligation motives surrounding football game attendance are potentially amplified beyond levels found when discussing other sport consumers. For example, these motives may be more present for a college student who lives, works, and studies on a

college campus than for a resident of a city that features a National Football League (NFL) team (Shoham & Kahle, 1996). As a result, the pressures felt by college students to attend games may be greater due to a combination of these factors.

Additionally, Kwon & Trail (2001) examined motivational differences for attendance in American and international college students. This study provided an indication that the motivations of these students are similar (aesthetics, eustress, self-esteem and identification), representing important considerations for intercollegiate athletics marketing experts to ensure that their product is enticing to the entire student body. Later, Trail et al. (2005) examined the relationship between the intention of college students to attend events and their actual attendance behaviors. The authors concluded that when the intentions of sport spectators to attend events are measured before the season, these intentions accounted for 45% of the variance in actual event attendance, indicating that intention is a significant predictor of sporting event attendance.

Emotional Attachment

After considering the motivations that lead to participation or non-participation in an activity, it is also important to consider the development of additional connections that may have been created as a result of these factors. Individuals are exposed to an abundance of opportunities, decisions, and products on a daily basis. Only a small number of these, however, inspire an internal connection (Dwyer et al, 2015; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Over time, these links can lead to an attachment. Marketing professionals attempt to identify these connections since signs of positive product attachment typically increase probabilities for consumption (Ball & Tasaki, 1992; Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingrich, & Iacobucci, 2010).

There is a growing interest in the role of emotions in consumer behavior literature due to a recognition that emotions play an integral role in the lives of human beings (Burns & Neisner,

2006; Hall et al., 2010). Organizations strive to create emotional attachments to their brands as opposed to merely emphasizing exposure to them (Thomson et al., 2005). Sirkaya, Petrick, and Choi (2004) noted the importance of emotions within a leisure context since these emotions are typically intertwined with the experiences of event attendees. This suggests that emotional attachment may be an important factor to evaluate for when discussing spectator attendance habits and what motivates spectators to attend.

As consumers develop brand attitudes, cognitive and emotional factors emerge that influence their thoughts and feelings (Zajonc & Markus, 1982). Over time, cognitive factors steadily decrease in their level of importance and emotional factors play a more dynamic role in the development of consumer preferences (Zajonc & Markus, 1982). This construct was conceptualized by Park and MacInnis (2006) as an emotional bond between brand and individual. Fedorikhin, Park, and Thomson (2008) claimed that, while the degree of fit between product and individual are associated with attachment, the involvement of the dimension of emotions intensifies the strength of these relationships.

Paxton and Moody (2003) stated that the existence of positive emotions in an attached relationship are often demonstrated through elevated degrees of identity towards a group or product. In a typical scenario, not only does the individual acknowledge the attachment, there is a level of perceived satisfaction with the relationship (Paxton & Moody, 2003). Once emotionally attached to a group, social identity mechanisms tend to correspond, such as competition with members from other groups or the promotion of in-group success. Thus, individuals that champion their attached status to a group will interpret competition from those outside of their group as a threat and will behave accordingly as a tactic to preserve that existing attachment (Park & MacInnis, 2006). These actions demonstrate a unique drive towards certain

behaviors that perception of motives and brand attitudes cannot consistently explain. Park and MacInnis (2006) state that emotional attachment is more likely to predict behaviors related to commitment and investment than other attitudes within the attachment-behavior relationship based on the constructs' ability to create temporal stability within an individual.

Research has found several practical benefits related to emotional attachment when considering consumer motivations (e.g., Fedorikhin et al., 2008; Hallberg, 2004). When emotional attachment is high, product investment and brand loyalty has been found to be even stronger (Hallberg, 2004). Fedorikhin et al. (2008) found that when tasked with creating a written list of emotions about their involvement with a product, highly attached individuals made a larger list and devoted more time towards it than those with lower levels of product attachment. Furthermore, the emotions listed amongst those that were highly attached were generally representative of a positive association between product and individual. This indicates that the emotional connection between a consumer and product may play a significant role in demonstrating a difference between the degrees of attachment to teams, players or sport organizations amongst affected individuals' motivation in a sport spectator context.

Emotional Attachment in Sport

The emotional bond that exists between a fan and his or her favorite team is considered to be "one of the most distinct attributes of spectator sport" (Dwyer et al., 2015; p. 570). A key component in developing this attachment is the presence of emotion (Bowlby, 1979; Fedorikhin et al., 2008); a characteristic that is prevalent in spectator sport (Dwyer et al., 2015). The development of this emotional bond may be attributable to a number of factors, including the unpredictable nature of the outcome of sporting events, but it has been established that sports fans cultivate unusually high levels of emotional affinity for their favorite teams relative to other

contexts (Knobloch-Westerwick, David, Eastin, Tamborini, & Greenwood, 2009). For example, Hirt, Zillman, Erickson and Kennedy (1992) found that avid sport fans are so emotionally connected to their teams that they feel that the outcomes of games or events affect them directly, though they are not actual participants. Attachment has been shown as an important construct to study in a sporting context, as research has also supported its ability to persuade continued sport product consumption (Koo & Hardin, 2008; Robinson & Trail, 2005). This has the potential to impact areas such as viewership interest, merchandise sales, and event attendance, all of which are major economic drivers for the sport industry. As a result of this connection and its associated economic impact, developing emotional attachment and evaluating the behavior that corresponds with it should be of high value to sports teams and leagues, such as intercollegiate athletics departments and professional sport front offices.

However, research has also demonstrated that like most consumers, sport fans do not become immediately attached to the sports they enjoy nor the teams that they chose to support (e.g., Crawford, 2003; Funk & James, 2001; Pimentel & Reynolds, 2004). Developing this attachment is described as a “longitudinal process” occurring over time and across contexts (Dwyer et al, 2015; p. 573). Generally, the development of attachment requires the act of a socializing agent, or an individual who already feels attachment to the sport product, who is then tasked with exposing other individuals in an effort to promote product interest. Pimentel and Reynolds (2004) cited the importance of socialization and a desire for acceptance as important antecedents to sport team attachment, which has the potential to be important in a study evaluating the attendance behaviors of college students. There are a number of entertainment options available on college campuses, but if a student has a circle of friends that is highly attached to university sport teams to the point that game attendance is valued, it may have an

impact on the attendance behaviors and entertainment selections of that individual regardless of personal levels of attachment.

If college students with otherwise limited interest in sport are influenced to attend a sporting event, the process of initiating them to their own fan identity may have begun. Crawford (2003) explains that once the fan phenomenon has been experienced, newly exposed individuals tend to progress towards their own higher levels of fandom and identification through this direct fan experience. This makes it more likely that even newly initiated individuals may develop the psychological attachment required to develop their own sport identity (Funk & James, 2004). An internalization process must occur that establishes a psychological connection to a team and merely liking a team does not result in the formation of an attachment. The transformation from attraction to sport to attachment to sport is a crucial point within this process. Pimentel and Reynolds (2004) refer to this process as the affective commitment stage, where a fanhood towards sport or towards a team becomes part of how an individual will personally identify and is often worn as a badge of honor.

The Psychological Continuum Model (PCM)

The development of an individual's sport attachments were evaluated by Funk and James' (2001) PCM, which was designed to provide a platform for studying spectators and sport fans. The PCM determined that sport fans and participants elevate their connection over time through awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance, and that these elements occur in a hierarchical order. The original model is included in the appendix as Figure 1.

The "Steps" of the PCM

Awareness, the initial step, refers to the initial awareness felt by an individual when they learn that certain sports or sports teams exist but is prior to any considerations about the selection

of any favorites. Next, attraction occurs once that individual acknowledges the selection of a favorite team or sport based on social-psychological and demographic need motives (Funk & James, 2001). Following attraction, attachment represents the psychological connection that begins to develop, creating an organic association between team and individual. Finally, the model discussed the eventual creation of allegiance (Funk & James, 2001). Allegiance can be defined as the development of an individual into a “loyal or committed fan of a sport or a team, resulting in influential attitudes that produce consistent and durable behavior” (Funk & James, 2001; p. 121). Allegiance is particularly important to this study, as allegiance of college students to their schools’ football team may drive attendance behaviors. However, this study also seeks to evaluate previous allegiances to other athletic programs. This allows for a determination to be made about whether these previous allegiances may inhibit college students from attending football games at the universities at which they attend.

According to Funk and James (2001), fans may steadily begin to understand the sport after they become aware of the teams that participate. Once this awareness occurs, sport consumption levels may increase. These individuals begin to perceive a potential point of organizational attachment guided in part by an emotional connection (Funk & James, 2001). Team allegiance is ultimately the goal, but the transformation from attraction to attachment is a crucial point within the continuum.

Funk and James (2006) tested the stages of the PCM through the application of Gladden and Funk’s (2002) Team Association Model; a scale that identifies dimensions of brand associations and their effects on brand equity. It was concluded that the development process of sport team allegiance was mediated by functional, symbolic, and emotional meaning, thus signifying the importance of emotion within the psychological connection between a sports fan

and a team. Moreover, the authors indicated that “attachment represents a dynamic, emotionally complex internal process” (Funk & James, 2006). Traditionally, points of fan attachment have consisted of team, player, and the type of sport or community (Robinson & Trail, 2005; Trail et al., 2003). Lock, Funk, Doyle and McDonald (2014) added that attachment and identification is generally consistent over time and is sustained even through challenges related to other factors, such as poor on-field performance.

While the aforementioned studies produce noteworthy information explaining the connections between motivations, sport consumer behavior and emotional attachment, research can be improved with a distinct focus on the emotional components, given their vital role in the general attachment construct. Spectator sport is one of the few products and services that naturally elicit a strong emotional connection, which demonstrates their level of uniqueness to other consumer products. Therefore, it is logical to assume that the emotional attachment components within sport are also uniquely distinct and worthy of additional focused inquiry. In this vein, it is of interest to this study to identify and evaluate constraints that may promote or prevent the development of emotional attachment among college students at non-autonomous universities. Specifically, this is measured by evaluating for prior allegiances to another team or university in an attempt to further the literature concerning emotional attachment in sport.

Market Segmentation and Fan Passion

There are a number of different fan segments who have varying levels of passion for sport, each with their own wants, needs and drivers for motivations such as game attendance, feelings about their team, and how frequently their teams cross their minds (Simmons et al., 2018; Wakefield, 2016). In the context of general consumer self-actualization research, Brooker (1975) discusses the importance of personality and its impact in making marketing decisions. In

this case, the self-actualization relates to a sport fan's level of identification with their team, and due to the development of their sport identify, the personalities of these consumers may differ. In any case, entities such as intercollegiate athletic departments or other organizations attempting to market their product should find value in segmenting their consumer base and understanding the varying personalities that are portrayed by each part of it.

Segmentation is an important strategic and marketing planning process that has existed since the earliest days of trade (Smith, 1956; Myers, 1996). This process involves the work of businesses or firms, or in this case, athletic departments, to identify market segments, making determinations as to what groups offer the best opportunity to sell a product or service (Myers, 1996). The objective of segmentation is "to identify people or companies who wanted similar types of offerings that were different from those wanted by other segments of the market" (Myers, 1996; p. 4).

Differences in factors such as fan identification (Trail & James, 2008), avidity (Hong, 2009), allegiance (Funk & James, 2001) and emotional attachment (Koo, Andrew, Hardin, & Greenwell, 2009) have been discussed in previous literature. Each of these mechanisms wields the power to segment fans. Wakefield (2016) developed a measure of fan passion in the role of a fan segmentation tool, finding that passion was a stronger predictor of spectator attendance, media consumption, and social media activity than more established measures like fan identification, social identity, and fan/team relationship quality.

The concept of fan passion is defined by Vallerand et al. (2003) as "a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy" (p. 757). These preferred activities are then internalized by the individual and become prominent features of a fan's identity (Simmons et al., 2018; Vallerand, 2008). A sample of the

work of Vallerand and colleagues on passion separates passion into two distinct categories; harmonious and obsessive (e.g., Vallerand et al., 2003; 2008; Vallerand, Rousseau, Grouzet, Dumais, Grenier, & Blanchard, 2006). Harmonious passion for activities features an embodiment of autonomy as it related to internalization and willingness to participate in the activity. Within the context of this study, it could be argued that this type of passion for a college football team may leave an individual as autonomous over their decision-making processes, leaving them open to motives or constraints that could drive or deter event attendance or sport consumption. On the contrary, obsessive passion overpowers an individual, leaving them unable to control their desires to participate in an activity due to intrapersonal or interpersonal pressures to maintain self-esteem or social status, and could potentially participate in said activity at the expense of other activities or time expenditures (Vallerand et al., 2003; 2006). Obsessive passion creates an interesting debate: are those who have reached levels of obsessive passion susceptible to motivational factors and/or emotional attachments, or are they already felt on an innate level that eliminates the need to consider motivations, or even potential constraints, when making decisions about attending sporting events or consuming sport-related products? This may be a topic worthy of discussion or future research.

More recently, passion was reintroduced by Wakefield (2016), who framed passion as a marketing construct. Wakefield (2016) argued that “the intensity of passion” (p. 230) has the power to drive fan consumption, putting the onus on sport marketing professionals as an additional way in which to segment fans. Individuals with higher levels of passion for a team consume more sport as a result of their affiliation (Simmons et al; 2018; Wakefield, 2016). Since there are varying levels of fan passion, if accurately identified by sport marketers, subsections of

these populations could be more homogenous, featuring more commonalities and leaving these segmented groups more receptive to messages created intentionally for each group.

Fan passion has some differences from other similar constructs, such as identity and attachment. Funk and James (2001) discuss attachment as a step in their Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) but define it as “a stable psychological connection” to a team (p. 132). Allegiance, a higher step on the development of the sport identity in the PCM, features indicators of this achieved attachment and adds the concept of attitudinal loyalty to the team. Conversely, Vallerand and colleagues’ (2003) discussion on passion taps into the heart, mind, body, and soul of a fan (Simmons et al., 2018; Wakefield, 2016). Wakefield provides a breakdown:

An individual with a passion toward a team would feel strong positive emotions about the team and its players (heart), frequently think about various aspects of the team such as games, teams, players, statistics (mind), spend considerable time participating in related consumption (body), and place a high priority on the team relative to other pursuits (soul; p. 231).

Wakefield (2016) discovered that fan passion is a better predictor of an individual’s sport-consumptive activities than measures of identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1993), involvement (Zaichkowsky, 2015), relationship quality (Kim, Trail, & Ko, 2011), and social identity (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). In an analysis of game attendance habits, team-related media consumption, and team-related social media usage, fan passion was the strongest predictor in the model (Wakefield, 2016). Additionally, in the case of game attendance, the remaining measures failed to explain any significant additional variances. These offer important considerations for

those in positions to complete or utilize sport marketing research in their endeavors, such as scholars or intercollegiate athletic departments. Understanding the importance of fan passion in generating interest in opportunities for students to attend on-campus events may allow for the development of more effective strategies to draw different fan segments to games using influential messages that are developed to target individuals with different levels of passion.

A Final Word on Motivations and Emotional Attachment

Understanding the impact of motivations and emotional attachment on consumer behavior remains an on-going process that is essential for non-autonomous intercollegiate athletic departments. Recent college football attendance has trended on a decline, leaving universities that participate in NCAA sports as members of non-autonomous conferences particularly susceptible to declining departmental revenues, both now in the form of ticket revenues and in the future in the form of future ticket purchasing behavior and donations. Without the assistance of other revenue streams such as lucrative television and media rights contracts, driving event attendance and developing long-term emotional connections by fans to their teams should be a vital part of departmental strategy.

The landscape of understanding human motives for taking action have also shifted over time. This has revealed itself in a change from the importance of biological factors to the importance of social-cognitive facets of human life. In sport, factors such as knowledge acquisition, vicarious achievement, and aesthetics have been shown to have the ability to partially explain the attendance behaviors of sport spectators. Sport researchers have developed a number of scales and instruments that have attempted to account for some of these shifts. Emotional attachment has also played an integral role, as the formation of these connections has the power to impact the sport identity and fanhood of consumers. The study may allow non-

autonomous athletic departments to possess the information necessary to better market their products to their student populations with the hope of bolstering attendance and providing hopes of a more stable economic future for their departments.

Consumer Constraints

While it is important to understand the motivations of individuals and their impact on their choices and behaviors, it is also important to acknowledge that there may be factors present that cause individuals to be constrained from participation in leisure activities. These constraints may have the ability to alter individual behaviors, attitudes, or preferences. This section will present background information concerning leisure constraints research, including a discussion relating to the overarching theory. Following, there will be a discussion of the Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints (HMLC), its fit in this study, its use in previous literature, and the creation of an adaptation of the HMLC based on the factors included in this study.

A Background on Leisure Constraints Research

The primary goal of leisure constraints research is to “investigate factors that are assumed by researchers and/or perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and/or to inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure (Jackson, 2000, p. 62). This definition explains that a proclivity towards engagement in leisure activities, as well as the level of enjoyment that individuals realize from their participation, varies across individuals and across contexts.

Beginning in the 1980’s, leisure constraints research presented a shift away from questions regarding specific barriers and towards general questions measuring their impact on nonparticipation. In their seminal work, Crawford and Godbey (1987) described these barriers as “any factor which intervenes between the preference for an activity and participation in it,” (p.

120) and determined that prior leisure constraints literature “has assumed only one relationship among leisure preferences, barriers and participation; that is, first a leisure preference exists, then a barrier intervenes and results in non-participation or, if no barrier intervenes, the individual will participate” (p. 119). As a result of these early considerations, later, the term barrier was considered to be too limiting, as it had given the appearance of being the only issue between preference and participation and insinuated that the negotiation of these barriers was not possible (Hurd & Forrester, 2006). The negotiation of leisure constraints is indeed possible, and the process by which this negotiation can occur will be featured later.

Crawford and Godbey (1987) also expanded upon certain foundational understandings, serving as a catalyst representing a change in understanding regarding constraints to leisure participation. Constraints were no longer considered to be solely physical or external to individuals, but also internal and social with a new emphasis placed on psychological and social factors. Armed with these understandings, the authors conceptualized a new model of leisure constraints that categorized barriers into three groups that encompassed individual, interpersonal, and contextual analytic levels (Godbey, Crawford, & Shen, 2010).

The first category discussed is intrapersonal constraints, described as limiters of participation as a result of individual preferences, attributes, or decisions (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Hurd & Forrester, 2006; Koo, Hardin & Shoffner, 2017). Examples of intrapersonal constraints include anxiety, stress, depression, prior socialization into specific leisure activities and availability of various leisure activities, all of which may be altered or modified over time as they are interacted upon by other factors (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Next, interpersonal constraints were identified. These constraints act to limit leisure participation due to an individuals’ relationship-related barriers such as a lack of interest in an activity from one’s

family or social group (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Simmons, Popp, McEvoy & Howell, 2018). This type of barrier may be realized, for example, if an individual is unable to locate a suitable group with whom to engage in a leisure activity. Finally, structural constraints emerged, or factors that create barriers to leisure participation as a result of situational and environmental factors such as changes in the seasons or climate, time, and money (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Hurd & Forrester, 2006).

The Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints (HMLC)

The categories established by Crawford and Godbey (1987) were operationalized by Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991), and later Jackson, Crawford, and Godbey (1993) into a hierarchical model for constraints to leisure participation. These studies served as observable indicators that represent the development of more complex theoretical concepts pertaining to leisure constraints (Godbey et al., 2010). The original model can be viewed in the appendices as Figure 2.

Crawford et al. (1991) determined that intrapersonal constraints were most proximal to leisure participants, demonstrating the strongest influence on the decision to participate in leisure activities. This determination was due to the thought that one's preference for an activity would not develop if intrapersonal constraints are present. In other words, intrapersonal constraints are also viewed as an antecedent state (Crawford et al., 1991; Koo, Hardin, & Shoffner, 2017) and may predispose individuals to identify leisurely pastimes with varying levels of appropriateness, interestingness, and availability that may either encourage or discourage participation (Hurd & Forrester, 2006). Next in order, individuals typically encounter interpersonal constraints, or relationship-related barriers, followed by structural constraints. Structural constraints are generally considered the easiest of the three categories of constraints to overcome, which

indicates that facilitators of leisure activities (and potentially organized sport, as well) should focus on interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints most prominently (Hurd & Forrester, 2006).

Jackson et al. (1993) determined that eventual leisure behavior was dependent upon an individual's ability to negotiate these constraints sequentially. However, it is noteworthy to mention that previous interactions among factors on the three established dimensions (intrapersonal, interpersonal, structural) have posed the question of whether constraints can be viewed as belonging to one particular dimension (Godbey et al., 2010). Previous studies have demonstrated possible interactions between constraints (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000; Scott & Munson, 1994), indicating that there may be an intertwining relationship between the three dimensions (Godbey et al., 2010). This has the potential to challenge the model and potentially offer more flexibility in its application.

The Limited Use of the Leisure Constraints Model in Sport Disciplines

The HMLC has evolved and been used within a variety of contexts in leisure research and is often used to account for participation in recreational sport. However, there has been limited research produced that utilizes the leisure constraints model in more organized sporting areas. One reason for its limited use may be intentional. Jackson (1997) warned of the dangers of a "Pac-Man problem," cautioning the field of leisure studies to be wary of overextending the HMLC to areas beyond its intended purpose, especially when other theoretical perspectives are not also incorporated. Crawford and Jackson (2005) suggest that this issue occurs most frequently when leisure constraints are expanded to macroscopic levels of analysis beyond the appropriate boundaries that exist. While the authors did not define their meaning by their use of the word "appropriate," the examination of professional and major college athletics, two areas frequently studied by sport management and sport sociology scholars, have the potential to offer

more macroscopic levels of analysis, raising issues with the use of the leisure constraints model in related contexts.

However, the use of the term “constraint” varies across disciplines, allowing for the potential use of a constraints model in other areas of research (Kim & Trail, 2010). For example, in economics, constraint is an umbrella term used to describe boundaries, obstructions, tendencies, and states (Hawkins, 2003). Additionally, constraints within in a business management context are described as factors that may limit an organizations performance relative to its objectives (Cox & Goldratt, 1986). This study incorporates Jackson’s (2000) definition; aspects of both individuals participating and enjoying a leisure activity (in this case, attending college football games), as well as the impact of barriers that may limit the organizational effectiveness of non-autonomous intercollegiate athletics departments if students do not attend home football games. Students are an important demographic to which athletic departments must market to ensure both present and future economic successes. An athletic department may evaluate their own organizational effectiveness based on their ability to cultivate these relationships with their current students. However, leisure constraint literature alone may not provide enough support to conduct research such as this, as major college sport is certainly a macroscopic application of the leisure constraints model.

Overall, leisure constraints are “a conceptual tool we employ in attempt to make sense out of what we see” (Samdahl, 2005; p. 346). However, additional considerations are required regarding its application. Samdahl (2005) argues that leisure constraints may struggle to provide rich understandings of the behaviors and experiences expressed by individuals due to challenges associated when other factors contributing to the complexity of people’s lives are not considered. If cultural ideologies and hegemonic structures are not accounted for, concepts which often

define what is valued and accepted in social groups, the use of the leisure constraints model may not be a good fit for sport sociology and sport management research, leading to its relatively infrequent use.

Incorporating the HMLC Into This Study

This study involves the application of leisure constraints to the context of student attendance constraints to attending NCAA athletic events, particularly college football games. Previous research has broadly examined constraint dimensions that may negatively impact attendance behaviors at various spectator sporting events (Casper, Kanters, & James, 2009; Kim & Trail, 2010; Koo, Hardin, & Shoffner, 2017; Ridinger & Funk, 2007; Simmons et al., 2017; 2018; Trail & Kim, 2011; Trail, Robinson, & Kim, 2008). As a result, a thorough understanding of leisure constraint literature is necessary when determining what barriers may exist with this particular population and leisure activity.

Crawford and colleagues' (1991) theoretical model (refer to Figure 2) suggests a hierarchical sequencing of constraints. However, according to other studies addressing similar populations (e.g., Simmons, Popp, McEvoy, & Howell 2017; 2018) student attendance at a sporting event would be contingent upon overcoming constraints at all three levels. Therefore, each pre-established dimension of constraints must be addressed. This study also introduces some other unexplored or underexplored constraints in an attempt to evaluate their impact, such as allegiance to other football teams, in-stadium technology challenges, and the allure of the at-home viewing experience. More information regarding survey instrumentation and the incorporation of various constraints will be discussed in Chapter Three.

A “Westernization” of the Leisure Constraints Model

A majority of the existing body of research discussing leisure constraints has been conducted in North America (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997; Chick & Dong, 2004; Iwasaki, 2008). Despite trends towards globalization in leisure research, a gap has been established between how leisure is discussed in Eastern and Western parts of the world (Iwasaki, 2008; Iwasaki, Nishino, Onda, & Bowling, 2007). Representing this point, the use of the word “leisure” itself has the possibility to offend non-Western cultural groups via the use of western terminology alone (Iwasaki et al., 2007). Ferris (1962) notes that Western individuals may have various reasons for or against participation in Western leisure activities. Therefore, it is important to recognize that individuals who exist in a non-Western society may have their own definitions and ideas about leisure activities that should also be valued. A failure to do so may perpetuate a power imbalance between Westerners and non-Westerners in leisure research that will create challenges to attempts at a full globalization of leisure research (Iwasaki et al., 2007).

This emphasizes a need to enhance the leisure constraints model to enable further application across various contexts, including those within the Western world, as well. Factors such as ethnicity (Aizlewood, Bevelander, & Pendakur, 2006; Li, Chick, Zinn, Absher, & Graefe, 2007), demographic characteristics (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997; Ampofo-Boateng, Yen, & Barnabas, 2013) and cross-cultural applications (Chick & Dong, 2004) have been examined for their impact across recreational and leisure contexts. Li et al. (2004) evaluated the leisure behaviors of three ethnic groups in the Los Angeles area: Anglos, Hispanics, and Asians, discovering that none of those ethnic groups were homogenous in terms of their cultural values, leading to varying impacts of those values on their leisure behaviors. Similarly, in an examination of recreational participation rates of ethnic minorities in Canada and the

Netherlands, Aizlewood et al. (2006) discovered that sociodemographic characteristics of individuals are generally stronger predictors of participation than those of their status as minorities. These studies demonstrate that even seemingly homogenous groups cannot be generalized for factors motivating or constraining leisure participation, creating challenges in creating a universal model that is applicable in all parts of the world.

These challenges indicate a need to construct cross-cultural research on leisure. Studies in this vein may have the ability to permit data exploration, allow for testing for factors across various social groups, and to examine societies across the world, unveiling the widest variations in cultural traits (Chick & Dong, 2004). Culture is also a constraint to leisure that does not clearly belong within any of the three established categories of leisure constraints, but rather impacts individuals on both an intrapersonal and interpersonal basis (Chick & Dong, 2004).

Segmentation and Identity of Students Attending American Universities

Similar to the previously discussed market segmentation earlier in Chapter Two, in this particular study, it is important to understand a number of factors that impact the game attendance behaviors of students attending American universities, as well as the fact that not all factors will impact individuals in a similar manner. In recent years, researchers have become more interested in how individuals define themselves through social groups. This can be demonstrated by individuals to both impose order on their social environments and to make sense of their own identities (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Urick, 2012). Self-categorizations of these individuals goes beyond demographic characteristics such as gender, and one such neglected category is the generation to which an individual belongs. Generational identity is defined as “an individual’s awareness of his or her membership in a generational group, and the significance of this group to the individual” (Urick, 2012; p. 103).

The place that individuals occupy within the life cycle has proven to be beneficial to both investigate the way they experience leisure constraints and to support strategies to alleviate those constraints (Hudson, 2000). These studies have appeared prominently in previous research in two forms. Research has examined how individuals experience constraints at a given stage of life, such as later life and adolescence (Hultsman, 1993; Raymore, Godbey, & Crawford, 1994). Other researchers have compared how constraints are experienced by those in different age groups or different life stages (McGuire, Dottavio, & O’Leary, 1986; Searle & Jackson, 1985). Whichever path has been investigated; these research lines indicate that leisure constraints are not experienced in the same way by people of different ages or generational identity. For this study, rather than attempting to pool all college football attendees as survey respondents to assess what constraints they feel to attending games, this study focuses narrowly on American college students. This will allow for the gathering perspectives from students holding various points of view. The responses of non-attendees and non-sport fans will be just as valued in this study as those from the most devout college-attending football fan. Collecting data in such a manner may allow for evaluation of the impact of various constraints not just across levels of fanhood, but across those who maintain a similar generational identity. This also follows the suggestions of previous research advocating for a population-specific approach when collecting data (Hultsman, 1993; Jackson & Scott, 1999; Jackson, 1994; 2005).

Similarities and Differences to Previous Studies

Scholars have placed an emphasis on the motives and attributes affecting college student sport attendance in the past (e.g., Ferreira & Armstrong, 2004; Perrault, 2016; Swanson, Gwinner, Larson, & Janda, 2003). Other studies have focused on groups such as season-ticket holders (Trail & James, 2001), the general population (Milne & McDonald, 1999) and non-

attendees (Koo, Hardin, & Shoffner, 2017; Simmons et al., 2017; 2018). This study sought to evaluate any student attending a American, non-autonomous university which competes in FBS football, ensuring that as diverse a sample as possible was collected. In doing so, the results of this study may provide insight into the importance of generational identity as a factor in leisure constraints research when compared to similar studies using a cross-generational sample, or one that is may not include college students.

In light of this, segmenting this study to contain only students attending American universities does not mean that this group should be treated exclusively as homogenous, which has been an issue in past research conducted concerning this demographic. Due to the concerns regarding student attendance of NCAA members, the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators (NACMA) previously commissioned three studies to examine student attendance behaviors (Guerra, 2015; Havard, Ryan, & McGee, 2017; NACMA, 2016). Results from these studies suggest that elements such as schoolwork, game time, weather, team performance, work, and ticket accessibility are the most commonly cited reasons students do not attend football games. Other factors of note preventing student attendance include the at-home viewing experience, traffic to get to the games, and lack of interest in football.

There are, however, concerns when considering the universality of these results. Despite having more than 11,000 responses for each of these analyses, the constraint-related results lump all students into one, homogenous group, failing to account for differences based on variables such as levels of fan passion, class standing, or school type/conference affiliation. Therefore, while these have been identified as constraints to student attendance, additional measurements are needed to determine the impact of constraints on different groups within this overarching group of individuals.

Average student attendance at college football games continues to trend on the decline nationwide, which has the potential to create revenue challenges as current students are continually viewed as the suppliers of future revenue and fanhood for college sport (Dodd, 2019; Simmons et al., 2018). This study places particular emphasis on determining the impact of various constraints on students who attend schools that are part of the non-autonomous Group of Five conferences to provide a focused look at a particular subsection of college football. One reason for this focus is due to the potential for differences in the perceptions of attendance constraints at varying competition levels. In a survey distributed to non-game-attending students during football game time slots on campuses, Simmons et al. (2017) revealed multiple differences in constraint intensity based on conference tier affiliation (Power Five, Group of Five, Football Championship Series (FCS)), frequency of participant game attendance, and timing of when the decision not to attend was made by those students. At autonomous, Power Five schools, for example, the time commitment to attend games was demonstrated to be a more significant constraint to attendance for respondents than it was at Group of Five or FCS schools. In terms of frequency of attendance, lack of student interest in pregame and in-game entertainment was a more significant constraint for students with no intentions to attend games that season, compared to those who planned to attend more frequently. This study focuses on such a specific group of college students in an attempt to perpetuate the sentiment that college students across the country should not be treated as a homogenous group. This can also be demonstrated by efforts to obtain responses from all sects of the student body at non-autonomous schools to evaluate for differences.

Criticisms and Shortcomings of LCT and the HMLC

Since the year 2000, there have been a number of critiques about the application of the leisure constraints model. This section alludes to factors representing some of the challenges faced when incorporating the HLMC in the 21st century. First, there has been an apparent lack of constraints research outside of the North American continent and as a result, there is a lack of leisure constraint literature available in journals published outside of the United States (Ravenscroft, Church, & Gilchrist, 2005). This issue extends beyond the non-Western part of the world, impacting even nations on the European continent. While there is research available on constraints in Europe, these studies are not traditionally of a leisure focus, instead pertaining to items such as constraints to sustainable transportation (Downward & Lumsdon, 2001; Ravenscroft, 2004; Ravenscroft & Rodgers, 2003), the constraints caused by an individual's fear of crime (Bairner & Shirlow, 2003; Montgomery, 1995) and the impact of geography on human activity by virtue of time and space constraints (Hagerstrand, 1978). There is also a disconnect between European and North American determinations on the impact of societal factors on constructs such as leisure. Europeans tend to measure for more societal factors, whereas North American research has a tendency to study leisure without a societal emphasis (Ravenscroft et al., 2005). This includes a European emphasis on societal power relationships and their impact on social interactions (Giddens, 1994).

Fundamentally, there have been questions raised regarding the utility of a concerted effort made to explain leisure participation. These ideas were initiated in the late 20th century by Samdahl & Jekubovich (1997) but have carried on into the new millennium (Nadirova & Jackson, 2000; Samdahl, 2005). Nadirova & Jackson (2000) suggested that the emphasis in leisure research be shifted from a focus on the behavioral consequences of encountering

constraints to measuring the impact that constraints may have on leisure enjoyment, or the perceived rewards obtainable via leisure participation. Samdahl (2005) asserts that “leisure constraints should be used as a contextual tool designed to assist in our understanding of leisure, not as an entity to be documented and confirmed” (p. 338). The author references Popper (1962), who indicated the dangers of treating a conceptual tool as if it were the truth, instead of an interpretation of events. Additionally, for a conceptualization to be characterized as a theory, it must be falsifiable, which may or may not apply to leisure constraints due to their existence as a label or lens through which to interpret an individual’s leisure activities (Samdahl, 2005). These are challenges that the leisure constraints model has yet to fully overcome.

Leisure constraints research has spanned a number of demographic variables, such as age (Hultsman, 1993), race and ethnicity (Floyd, Gramann, & Saenz, 1993; Hultsman, 1993), immigrant status (Stodolska, 1998), social class (Raymore et al., 1994), nation of citizenship (Carroll & Alexandris, 1997; Kay & Jackson, 1991), and gender (Raymore et al., 1994). Despite this lengthy list, Auster (2001) raises concerns, as regardless of the variables examined, methodological approaches to leisure constraint study has remained static. This indicates a lack of evolution in the methodological aspects of the theory and relegates heterogeneous concepts to be evaluated for under the same umbrella.

There has also been an inherent classification in leisure constraints research that establishes constraints as “bad” and participation as “good” – the “bad” constraints acting as the negative factors that inhibit leisure participation. An individual’s participation in these activities is typically labeled as desirable and “good” (Samdahl, 2005). This tenet has been condemned as too simplistic an understanding of the impact of constraints on participation (Samdahl, 2005; Shogan, 2002). In a circumstance such as an examination of employee participation in a

corporate recreation outing (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001), this indicates an assumption that constraints are acting to block access to a desired activity. For example, if a question asked of an employee about having forgot athletic clothing in order to participate in the activity, it is possible that they may have done so on purpose, as participating in corporate recreation may not be an activity that everyone finds desirable. This constraint likely cannot be explained within the results of that study. In some contexts, it may be more desirable for an individual to acquiesce to a constraint that it is to navigate through it towards participation (McGuire & Norman, 2005). However, through the representation that constraints are “bad,” and activity is “good,” this represents a flawed understanding that negotiating those constraints must be considered a worthwhile endeavor, which may not always be the case (Samdahl, 2005).

There has also been an emphasis in leisure constraints research upon the importance of the individual, indicating that individuals are capable of finding solutions to overcome their own constraints (Crawford et al., 1991; Jackson, 1993; Samdahl, 2005). This has the potential to ignore the powerful cultural influences that have the power to shape leisure activity participation and puts pressure and responsibility on the individual to exercise factors outside of their control (Henderson, 1997; Samdahl, 2005). This represents an added challenge, again representing the need for more cross-cultural considerations in constraints research.

Regarding the original HMLC developed by Crawford et al. (1991), there have been considerations given to the dimensionality of leisure constraints (i.e., a constraint as intrapersonal, interpersonal, or structural). These divisions based on dimensionality may not be as rigid as once thought, and instead may be rather pliable. For example, Auster (2001) indicates the challenges associated with locating intrapersonal constraints within the individual, as solely recognizing those factors does not provide context into their existence – that could be influenced

by society at-large. Shaw and Henderson (2005) suggest that intrapersonal factors such as the ethic of care and a lack of sense of entitlement caused women to feel the impact of a lack of time for leisure activities, which are generally categorized as structural constraints. Gilbert and Hudson (2000) noted possible interactions between the three dimensions of the HMLC, challenging the linear perspective that the model indicates. Godbey et al. (2010) revisited the early form of the theory and indicated that constructs can be correlated, determining that “it is implausible to contend that there are any relevant variables connected with social life that would be entirely unrelated” to the formation of leisure preferences and constraints (p. 114).

Further, while there is a high level of methodological consistency in various leisure constraint studies, there is also a lack of a standardized instrument for measuring these constraints (Godbey et al., 2010; Hubbard & Mannell, 2001). This has created a calling for the development of a comprehensive list of constraint items while staying sensitive to various leisure activities and their unique characteristics (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001). However, regarding the dimensionality of the items on that list, Godbey et al. (2010) warns against a rigid interpretation of the sequential hierarchy that was proposed in early HMLC-work, which indicated that intrapersonal constraints are the first barrier encountered. There is not necessarily a pre-determined, sequential order of how these constraints may be realized by individuals and can depend on the individual themselves. Additionally, constraints also have the propensity to evolve as these factors evolve, which may create challenges in measuring these changes (Godbey et al., 2010). Each of these challenges has the potential to impact forthcoming research on leisure constraints and represents an important consideration to have when undertaking research in this area.

Constraint Negotiations

The leisure constraints model has evolved since its inception. One way that it has done so involves the realization of and emphasis placed upon the ability of an individual to negotiate constraints to leisure participation. The concept of leisure constraints was initially designed to examine why people do not engage in leisure activities (Jackson, 1988); the determination that individuals often can and do participate in leisure activities despite the existence of obvious obstacles is due to their ability to negotiate these constraints (Kay & Jackson, 1991; Shaw, Bonen, & McCabe, 1991). The process of negotiation enlightens the cognitive and behavioral strategies adopted by individuals in order to resist or overcome constraints (Jackson & Rucks; 1995, Kocak, 2017). These constraint navigations debunked implicit assumptions that constraints were insurmountable and thus would naturally limit participation, emphasizing the effects of individual differences in decision-making and leisure participation (Jackson et al., 2001; Scott, 1991). The discovery of negotiations required an expansion of the body of existing knowledge regarding leisure constraints, as well as establishing constraint negotiations as a line of research (Samdahl, Hutchinson, & Jacobson, 1999). Some of the strategies identified that help individuals negotiate these constraints are reorganizing of an individual's schedule, saving money, and persevering through an activity in the presence of danger or fear (Kay & Jackson, 1991; Scott, 1991). These negotiation strategies may modify participation, rather than foreclosing any possibility for participation (Jackson et al., 1993).

While the recognition of knowledge surrounding negotiation strategies extends beyond the scope of the original discussion regarding leisure constraints, in their seminal work, Crawford and Godbey (1987) discussed that negotiation was possible due in part to participant motivations and preferences, stating that "if preference is significantly greater than perceived

constraints, the leisure activity in question may be undertaken despite the presence of such barriers” (p. 124). Therefore, the discussion surrounding leisure constraints was not intended to impose barriers upon individuals via a monolithic impact. As an example of additional understandings regarding constraints, Iso-Ahola and Mannell (1985) revealed ideas that while some constraints may have permanent effects, others may be temporary in nature. These differences may affect rates of participation as a result.

In the literature, three key points emerged regarding the proposition of negotiating constraints. First, constraints can be negotiated differently by individuals and in a number of ways. Some of these strategies may include efforts to increase one’s awareness of the existence of leisure opportunities, acquiring additional skills to participate in certain activities, alterations of timing and/or frequency of leisure participation, or modification of other aspects of an individual’s life to accommodate leisure behaviors. Second, the existence and the effects of constraints do not necessitate nonparticipation. Finally, there may be differences in participation among individuals who have negotiated constraints versus those who have not, such as their frequency of participation, their levels of specialization, and their scheduling of engagements (Jackson et al., 1993).

Kay and Jackson (1991) split individuals into three groups to demonstrate how negotiation propositions affect different individuals. The first group was categorized as a reactive response, or individuals who did not participate in the desired activity. A second group was represented by individuals demonstrating a successful, proactive response. This second group of individuals experienced constraints, but those constraints did not alter their levels of participation. Finally, a third group was classified as having a partly successful proactive response. These individuals participate in their desired activities but do so in an altered manner

as the result of constraints. These differences reiterate the understanding that constraints may not be felt by all participants in leisure activity and that those who are affected may be affected in different ways.

These foundational findings represent alterations to the original understandings of leisure constraints and begin to represent intricacies in the negotiation process. However, more recent research has advanced the theory, placing negotiation in a broader context and exploring relationships between constraints and other concepts (White, 2008). For example, Hubbard and Mannell (2001) provided evidence that motivation to participate may be an important element to consider in the negotiation process. The authors attempted to provide answers as to why individuals participate in leisure activities via an examination of various motives and satisfactions. They also determined that an individual's social roles must be interpreted in relation to other environmental powers. Son, Mowen, and Kerstetter (2008) expanded this concept by creating a motivation-balance model. Their findings support the vital role of motivation in both developing and using strategies to overcome constraints to participation, creating additional ties between the two concepts.

Loucks-Atkinson and Mannell (2007) used social cognitive theory to incorporate a negotiation-efficacy construct, "defined as a people's confidence in their ability to successfully use negotiation strategies to overcome constraints" (p. 20). This study demonstrated that negotiation strategies in individuals, when developed, may have the capacity to increase participation. White (2008) examined the interactions of motivations, constraints, negotiations, and the impact of negotiation-efficacy on outdoor recreation. Results were consistent with previous research but established that constraint negotiations may be overcome through the dynamic integration of a number of influences.

There are a number of factors in play that complicate our understandings of the negotiation process. Factors such as constraints being permanent or temporary, motivations, and the use of social cognitive theory have all been proven to, in some way, affect levels of participation by individuals who navigate leisure constraints. These various factors demonstrate the complexities of identifying why and how different individuals participate in leisure activities.

Constraint Negotiations in Student Sport Consumers

It is of particular interest to this study to understand how college students at American universities negotiate factors that influence their football game attendance behaviors. In order to consider attending a football game on campus, a student must have the information regarding the event communicated to them in some manner. Students must also consider their level of fan loyalty, evaluate personal conflicts to attendance, and consider other factors such as potential in-stadium technology issues, travel issues, and the allure of the at-home viewing experience as they negotiate their way towards game attendance.

Communication

Within the context of this study, communication is considered the availability of information being relayed to students about home football games on campus. This concept was first explored in a spectator attendance context by Ridinger and Funk (2007), who included communication under the umbrella of structural constraints due to a lack of communication acting as a peripheral condition limiting student attendance at athletic events. Subsequently, Koo, Hardin, and Shoffner (2017) examined the impact of this dimension, exploring the idea that a lack of student awareness about games occurring and channels through which to acquire tickets could limit football home game attendance. Among 1,945 respondents attending a major public university in the Southeastern region of the United States, communications, including ticketing

information, general game information, ticket prices and game location, accounted for nearly 12% of the variance of the constraints examined, ranking only behind intrapersonal constraints and travel constraints. This demonstrates the impact that can occur on a college campus due to a lack of available information about on-campus athletic events.

For a student to navigate communication constraints, it is important that athletic departments do not depend on students receiving word about athletic events through mainstream media sources or on their own time. It is important that these events be promoted campus-wide to ensure that any potentially interested student have the information that they need to make the decision to attend. Additionally, it is important that this information penetrate as many social circles on a college campus as possible. Generally, the development of attachment to a sports team requires the act of a socializing agent, or an individual who already feels attachment to the sport product, who is then tasked with exposing other individuals to promote product interest. Pimentel and Reynolds (2004) cited the importance of socialization and a desire for acceptance as important antecedents to sport team attachment, which has the potential to be important in a study evaluating the attendance behaviors of college students. There are a number of entertainment options available on college campuses, but if a student has a circle of friends that is highly attached to university sports teams to the point that game attendance is valued, it may have an impact on the attendance behaviors and entertainment selections of other members of that social group, including their propensity to attend home football games.

Allegiance and Loyalty

At many universities, there are likely a number of students who demonstrate allegiance and loyalty to their school and its athletics programs without any coercion or influence from others. However, if college students with otherwise limited interest in sport can be convinced to

attend a sporting event via campus communications, via a socializing agent, or otherwise, the process of initiating them to their own fan identity may have begun. Crawford (2003) explains that once the fan phenomenon has been experienced by attending a game or event, newly exposed individuals tend to progress towards their own higher levels of fandom and identification through this direct fan experience. This makes it more likely that even newly initiated individuals may develop the psychological attachment required to develop their own sport identity (Funk & James, 2004). An internalization process must occur that establishes a psychological connection to a team, as merely liking a team does not result in the formation of an attachment. The transformation from attraction to sport to attachment to sport is a crucial point within this process. Pimentel and Reynolds (2004) refer to this process as the affective commitment stage, where a fanhood towards sport or towards a team becomes part of how an individual will personally identify and is often worn as a badge of honor.

The development of an individual's sport attachments were evaluated by Funk and James' (2001) Psychological Continuum Model (PCM), designed to provide a platform for studying spectators and sport fans. Outlined earlier in this chapter, The PCM determined that sport fans and participants elevate their connection over time through awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance. Most relevant to this study, the model discussed the eventual creation of allegiance (Funk & James, 2001). Allegiance can be explained as the development of an individual into a "loyal or committed fan of a sport or a team, resulting in influential attitudes that produce consistent and durable behavior" (Funk & James, 2001; p. 121). Allegiance is particularly important to this study, as allegiance to their schools' football team may drive attendance behaviors. However, this study also seeks to evaluate previous allegiances to other athletic programs. This allows for a determination to be made about whether these previous

allegiances may inhibit college students from attending football games at their universities. More information about this concept will be available later. Team allegiance is ultimately the goal of those marketing sport, but the transformation from attraction to attachment is a crucial point within the continuum (Funk & James, 2001). If this process occurs, it may provide the means for initially disinterested college students to develop their own allegiances and attachments, which may influence them to attend more football games on campus.

Personal Conflict

Personal conflicts for college students that present barriers to event attendance may take various forms. However, they have demonstrated their impact in previous research. Factors included in this area are items such as school commitments (i.e., preparing for tests, writing papers), commitments to friends, job-related or work commitments, or family commitments. In a study evaluating non-attending students for constraints that inhibit attendance at home football games, Simmons et al. (2018) revealed that among 472 students across six campuses, school commitments were rated as the most prominent factor impacting non-attendance among 33 constraints, with commitments to friends, family commitments, and work commitments all being revealed to be factors, as well.

However, these constraints can be navigated by college students using strategies from some of the earliest work considering constraint negotiations. The reorganization of an individual's schedule has been identified as one way to negotiate towards leisure participation (Kay & Jackson, 1991; Scott, 1991) with the potential to modify participation, rather than foreclosing the possibility (Jackson et al., 1993). The argument can be made that this may also impact game attendance behaviors. This negotiation may be difficult to overcome on its own since if there are not additional reasons, such as social elements or a developing allegiance that

encourages schedule alterations to attend, it may not be desirable for a student to change their schoolwork schedules, work schedules, or to consider home football games when making other plans with family or friends. Therefore, it is important to consider additional social aspects when examining personal conflict for its impact on game attendance.

Technological Issues & At-Home Viewing

The power of technology may act as a deterrent within the confines of this study in multiple ways. This study introduces two elements that may be of increasing importance to today's college student and sport spectator: the impact of in-stadium technology and the motivations for at-home sport consumption in lieu of game attendance. The at-home viewing experience has been identified in the past as a constraint to student attendance (Guerra, 2015; Havard, Ryan, & McGee, 2017; NACMA, 2016; Simmons et al., 2018). However, other factors were notably not considered in these studies, such as levels of fan passion, school conference affiliation, or class standing (i.e. Freshman, Sophomore). Additionally, Simmons et al. (2018) examined only non-attending students without evaluating the perspectives of students who were attending. Therefore, while it has been identified as a consideration when discussing student attendance, further research in the vein of this project is needed to determine the impact of the at-home viewing experiences on the student sub-section of the college football fan base.

There has been a growing concern among sport industry professionals regarding the shifting preferences of their fans to watch sporting events at home (Luker, 2012, Larkin, Fink, & Trail, 2015; Pritchard & Funk, 2006). It is also recognized that many college students do not live in the same location for the entirety of their college careers, nor do many live in the homes of their parents or guardians. For the purposes of this study, Larkin, Fink, and Trail (2015) provide

a functional definition of *home* as “an individual’s permanent and/or temporary residence” (p. 184).

A recent Nielsen Total Audience Report (2018) indicated that the 18-34-year-old demographic spent the most time of any group using TV-connected or digital devices; an age range that includes that of the typical American college student. This could indicate a heightened propensity for this group to utilize these options in lieu of physical attendance at home football games. Kim and Lee (2003) discovered that technological attributes such as picture size, clarity and sound have increased television consumption, while technological attributes, comfort, safety and ease of watching have each been discussed as motivating factors to watch events from home (Gantz & Wenner, 1995; Weed, 2010). Since technological advancements that improve home viewing have continued to increase exponentially in recent years, it is of interest to this study to determine what power the allure of the at-home sport consumption experience may have on rates of student attendance.

In-stadium technology (or a lack thereof) may also have an impact on college student spectators. Unreliable Wi-Fi accessibility has proven to be a constraining factor on college student attendance in previous research (Simmons et al., 2018). However, further research is needed to measure the importance of in-stadium Wi-Fi, as well as other technological factors such as the ability to post to social media from the areas around the stadium on game day. The average time spent by adults in the United States on mobile social networking sites and apps is seven-times that spent on a computer and nearly six-times that spent accessing via a tablet, meaning that an ability to access reliable internet on-the-go is of increasing importance (The Nielsen Total Audience Report, 2018). Adults age 18-34 also spend an average of nearly three hours per day using apps or accessing the web on a Smartphone, representing 34% of their total

media time each day (The Nielsen Total Audience Report, 2018). If reliable internet in or around a stadium on a football game day is not available, it may have a noteworthy impact on the college-student demographic, as smartphone utility would also be limited. This has the potential to be an additional deterrent to game attendance that is worth measuring for.

Students may have challenges navigating these technological constraints. If there is an issue, the most obvious way to improve this situation involves providing more reliable Wi-Fi to football stadiums. The development of attractive pre-game and in-game entertainment options may also help encourage students to alter their behaviors and untether from mobile technology habits for the purposes of attending home football games. However, further research would be needed to determine prevailing effects.

Travel

Parking issues, traffic issues, and stadium accessibility have all been noted constraints to student attendance at football games (Koo, Hardin, & Shoffner, 2017; Simmons et al., 2018). Similar to communication, Ridinger and Funk (2007) classified travel constraints as a subsection of the structural constraints from the original model developed by Crawford and Godbey (1987). Koo, Hardin, and Shoffner (2017) evaluated that constraints such as traffic congestion, parking and travel time combined to account for nearly 16% of the variance of the constraints, demonstrating the high impact on student attendance of the variables measured. Simmons et al. (2018) also determined that traffic, parking, and stadium accessibility were factors constraining non-attending students from attending games, particularly for low-passion fans.

This demonstrates an issue: if traffic, parking and accessibility are factors limiting game attendance, then they are also limiting the likelihood of allegiance and loyalty to the college football produce. Crawford (2003) explains that game attendance is important as individuals

progress towards their own higher levels of fandom and identification. A lack of attendance on the basis of these factors may further inhibit college student attendance in the future due to the associated static allegiance and loyalty factors. However, social agents remain important. Carpooling may lower stressors for some individuals, which requires individuals to attend within a social group. Offering incentives for carpooling (i.e., upgraded seats, special tailgating privileges for cars with three-plus individuals) may be in the best interest of athletic departments. Of course, many students live on campus, so research differentiating between campus residents and off-campus residents may provide enlightenment on the related impacts of travel issues. Potential solutions may include expediting lines to enter the stadium or additional staffing at gates, but these may be important considerations to evaluate when assessing barriers to attendance that impact students.

Modifying the Leisure Constraints Model

This study adds some additional facets to existing models outlining leisure constraints. First, allegiance to another team was added as a constraint. For example, a student may choose to attend or watch a college football game of a team that they grew up rooting for, rather than going to a game at the school that they attend. Non-autonomous athletic programs tend to be smaller in nature and may be less recognizable on a national scale, leading to the belief that knowledge or allegiance regarding a larger, more prominent program may play a role as a constraint. This is an aspect of event attendance considerations that has been yet to be explored at this time, and like intrapersonal constraints, may appear as antecedent when considering leisure preferences.

Secondly, following Ridinger and Funk (2007), structural constraints were divided into three subsections: conflict, communication, and commuting. These three areas have all demonstrated constraining characteristics in the past when applied to a student population who

has the option to attend NCAA athletic events, so it seems appropriate to include them again (Koo, Hardin, & Shoffner, 2017; Ridinger & Funk, 2007).

Additionally, the impact of in-stadium technology issues, such as Wi-Fi accessibility and the ability to post to social media is introduced as an additional structural constraint. Wi-Fi access has been documented as a constraint to student attendance in past research (Simmons et al., 2018), but not among a diverse sample of the student body. There are also potential interpersonal implications regarding the ability of attendees to reliably post to social media from the stadium on game days which will be considered as well.

Finally, the at-home viewing experience is introduced as a stand-alone constraint in this adaption of the leisure constraints model. Home viewing of sporting events, in lieu of attending games, continues to create concerns for sport marketing professionals. This concept has been measured for in other research addressing leisure constraints among a student population (Simmons et al., 2017; 2018); however, only non-attendees of an on-going athletic event were evaluated for its impact. This study sought a more complete sample of college students, including avid sports fans and those who may be disinterested. This may allow for a more representative conclusion regarding the impact of watching games at home on event attendance.

Overall, this conceptualized model appears similar to the model featured by Crawford et al. (1991) and Jackson (2005): it lists various dimensions of constraints that may intercede on an individual's path towards participation (in this case, student spectator attendance). This model also considers motivations for their impact in the process. An initial iteration of this model appears as Figure 3 in the attached appendix.

Filling the Gaps in the Literature

This study seeks to fill several gaps in the literature as it pertains to student attendance at non-autonomous NCAA football games. First, no known study has both focused on occasional attendees and non-attendees simultaneously, nor focused specifically on students attending Group of Five institutions. There have been studies that have evaluated the motivations and constraints for those attending intercollegiate athletic events that have covered varying levels of competition. For example, Robinson, Trail, Dick, and Gillentine (2005) examined consumers attending collegiate football games at the NCAA Division I-A (presently referred to as the FBS), Division I-AA (presently referred to as Football Championship Subdivision, or FCS), Division II and Division III levels. It was discovered that those attending NCAA Division I football games were more motivated by vicarious achievement than those attending games at other levels, while drama and aesthetics were also emphasized for their importance. While this study focused more heavily on factors motivating attendance rather than those that constrain, these factors may be important to consider as they had a clear impact on college football attendance behaviors. However, that study did not look at the differences between schools within the Division I-A level, while this study is focused on those schools generally relegated to the lower echelon of FBS college football competition.

Koo et al. (2017) utilized a survey instrument to evaluate students at a major public university located in the southeastern United States regarding the impact of various constraints on home football game attendance. The authors chose not to evaluate the responses of individuals who had attended all games that had occurred at the time of data collection; a procedure that is emulated in this study, since in this case, 100% attendance represents a successful negotiation of any constraints faced. Koo et al. (2017) evaluated for five categories of

leisure constraints: intrapersonal constraints, communication constraints, travel constraints, time constraints, and interpersonal constraints. Communication, time, and travel constraints represented a split of the more traditional structural constraint umbrella; a concept first introduced by Ridinger and Funk (2007). Overall, 23.51% of the variance of constraints preventing student attendance could be controlled by their attitudes of beliefs, or intrapersonal constraints. Travel-related issues, such as traffic, congestion, parking, and travel time accounted for 15.87% of the variance of the constraints, while communication-related issues regarding the event accounted for 11.64% of the variance. Time-related constraints, which appear in this instrument as a portion of structural constraints, accounted for 8.17% of the variance, while interpersonal constraints accounted for 8.13% of the variance. Since each of these five areas of leisure constraints represented variances regarding constraints to student attendance, questions evaluating for each of these areas has been included for examination within this study, as well.

Introducing levels of fan passion into the realm of spectator constraints, Simmons et al. (2018) conducted a similar study featuring in-person survey delivery in which non-game-attendees were questioned during on-campus football games about why they chose not to attend. This sample also included students from Power Five, Group of Five, and FCS institutions. Overall, school commitments, an overall lack of interest in football, and friend commitments yielded mean scores indicating high levels of impact on student attendance behaviors. For the purposes of this study, while fan passion is not specifically included, the concept of allegiance to another team has similarities and was introduced in this study as a measure for this specific target population. It may be interesting in later studies to determine the impact of allegiance to another team on universities participating in football competition across various levels.

However, since no known study has explicitly focused on students attending non-autonomous institutions, it may be important to note differences that are detected when evaluating individuals who attend these lower-level FBS institutions relative to their Power Five counterparts, potentially in the form of future research opportunities. It will also be valuable to gain the perspectives of students who display varying levels of interest in attending home football games. This may allow the researcher to evaluate for trends by collecting a sample representing the entire student body, perhaps allowing for further fan segmentation. Also, the current study asks students to explain their past attendance behaviors rather than speculating about future attendance intentions, converse to the work of Trail et al. (2005) but providing data based on actual trends instead of forecasted plans.

The Practical Impact of This Study

This study sought to offer both practical and theoretical contributions to NCAA athletic departments and the field of sport management. Presently, from a ticket-sales perspective, current students are generally not considered to be of the utmost importance; however, the goal of athletic administrations is to turn those students into alumni who are still fans of their school's team decades later (New, 2014). Football in particular has demonstrated connections to donations to athletic programs as a driver for these alumni contributions (Young, 2012). If these revenue streams are threatened, it may not be football that pays the price; instead, it may force conferences and institutions to make challenging decisions regarding other NCAA sports that they sponsor. Revisiting the Texas A&M University example, after accounting for the \$119M in alumni contributions that were directed towards football (Smith, 2018), \$141M remained available for the use of other sports to cover operating costs. These sports are generally not self-sufficient from a revenue standpoint and generate substantially less revenue than football through

their own endeavors. Therefore, it is important to understand the current landscape of attendance trends at NCAA football games to help universities and athletic departments. Understanding motivators and barriers to attendance for current college students may allow for insight to be gained that may be useful both now and in an increasingly uncertain future for college athletics, including football. The results of this study also have the potential to be utilized by NCAA athletic departments as a means to better understand their student bodies, allowing them to more effectively market and promote their product to both current and future students and ensuring continuing donations that may be useful for the viability of football and other university-sponsored athletic teams.

CHAPTER THREE

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Section Overview

This section will discuss the use of survey methodology to collect the data for this project and will outline the decision-making processes undertaken regarding channels of survey distribution. Following, there will be a discussion regarding sampling technique, survey development and instrumentation, as well as an overview of similar, related studies using survey distribution as a means of data collection.

Survey as a Method of Data Collection

The use of survey as a means of data collection “has helped transform our view of society and the issues it faces” and “has changed the way we think about obtaining information from a large population” (Brick, 2011, p. 872). These factors have led to an increased ability to collect data from large, diverse groups regarding a variety of topics considered valuable to society, such as income levels and societal spending habits, unemployment rates, or national crime rates (Fowler, 2014). Using surveys as a method of data collection allows for the development of inferences and observations about a targeted population by asking questions and analyzing responses (Brick, 2011; Fowler, 2014).

This study will rely on the development of a questionnaire, or a type of survey containing “a standardized set of questions to gain information from a subject” (Gratton & Jones, 2010, p. 126). Questionnaires are perhaps the most commonly used method used in sport-related research. These instruments are typically used in studies featuring quantitative research designs and are used as a way to obtain information from large groups (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

Prior to survey development, an evaluation should occur to determine if the use of survey methodology is the best tool for a particular study. According to Fowler (2014), the goals of survey research are two-fold: describing the sample of people who respond allows the researcher to describe the target population, as well as facilitating attempts to use the answers given to describe the characteristics of the respondents. Survey use is most advantageous and applicable when seeking to describe trends within a population, attempting to describe the relationships of variables on a population, or to compare groups (Creswell, 2008). Surveys have the ability to assess individual beliefs, attitudes, or opinions, evaluate the effectiveness of a program, or to identify the needs of a population (Creswell, 2008). Survey instruments can also be deployed over short time periods and at minimal cost depending on the means of distribution (Brick, 2011; Creswell, 2008; Fowler, 2014; Gratton & Jones, 2010). Participants may also be canvassed anonymously which may limit the potential impact of biases (Creswell, 2008; Gratton & Jones, 2010).

However, survey use is not always the best choice for collecting information. The data collected by survey administration is self-reported, which may indicate the patterns of thinking of the respondent, but responses are not necessarily representative of actual behaviors (Creswell, 2008). Surveys also may not offer means to control for all variables that impact the independent and dependent variables in a research study and may provide little flexibility to respondents in how they answer questions (Creswell, 2008). Further, low response rates may not allow for results to be representative of the population being evaluated (Creswell, 2008; Gratton & Jones, 2010) and complex questions may create challenges among respondents depending on the channel of survey delivery (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

While survey research has made it possible to study a wide range of topics in a timely manner (Brick, 2011), the method of survey administration must also be considered. Factors such as time commitments for survey administrators and respondents, costs to the researcher, and response rates may fluctuate as a result of the selected mode of survey distribution. Within survey data collection, there exist several ways to acquire data, including but not limited to in-person survey administration, survey distribution via mail, deploying an online instrument, and survey administration over the telephone (Fowler, 2014; Gratton & Jones, 2010; Taylor, 2017).

Methods of Survey Delivery

When considering modes for survey administration, it is important to consider that each features its own set of advantages and disadvantages. A synopsis regarding the qualities of each respective mode is featured in this section.

In-person Survey Administration

In-person survey administration likely enlists the highest levels of cooperation among respondents, allows for more complex instructions or sequencing within the survey since assistance is available from the survey administrator, and incorporates a means to establish rapport and build confidence among respondents to what can otherwise feel like a rather impersonal experience (Fowler, 2014). Conversely, there are generally heightened associated costs with in-person delivery, it requires close geographic proximity to survey participants, and requires longer time periods to complete. There may also be barriers to accessibility among various populations such as those residing in high-crime areas or student populations (Fowler, 2014).

Mail Surveys

Survey distribution via mail is generally more cost-effective than in-person survey distribution and since it can occur from virtually anywhere, the presence of a trained staff to

administer the instrument is typically not necessary (Fowler, 2014). Distribution by mail gives respondents the time that they require to offer thoughtful answers and to consult with others, as well as offering generally high response rates if the topic is well-aligned with the targeted population (Fowler, 2014). However, since response rates are considered to be contingent on the target population, mail surveys may not be appropriate for all target demographics, potentially leading to lower response rates in some cases and representing challenges in collecting a representative sample (Colton & Covert, 2007). There may also be challenges associated with locating accurate mailing addresses for delivery to the sample population, as well as lengthier windows to collect data due to time spent in the mail (Colton & Covert, 2007; Fowler, 2014).

Telephone Surveys

Telephone survey delivery also offers lower costs than those associated with in-person delivery, while random-digit dialing offers the ability to sample large populations in a potentially shorter data collection window (Fowler, 2014). Additionally, telephone interviews offer a more personal connection between survey administrator and respondents, offer opportunities for the administering individuals to answer respondent questions, and are well-suited to gather comprehensive answers to open-ended probing questions (Colton & Covert, 2007). Telephone survey distribution also makes it unnecessary for the researcher to be located in close geographic proximity to respondents (Fowler, 2014). However, telephone survey delivery creates challenges when sampling: the researcher becomes reliant on the correctness of telephone numbers and faces potential issues when contacting respondents who do not have a landline telephone since cell phone users have predominantly unlisted numbers (Colton & Covert, 2007; Newport, 2004). Telephone survey distribution may also be subject to data collection challenges regarding

administrator vocal intonations and phrasing as these aspects could alter respondent comprehension of the meaning of survey items (Colton & Covert, 2007).

Internet-based Surveys

Surveys can also be deployed online, often through email. Email surveys offer the benefit of instant information dissemination (Colton & Covert, 2007; Gratton & Jones, 2010). Online survey deployment also offers the researcher low costs, offers the potential for the rapid collection of responses, provides respondents time to provide thoughtful answers, and offers the advantage of anonymity since there is no interaction with an interviewer, making online survey use ideal for collecting more sensitive information (Fowler, 2014). Internet-based surveys also offer the potential for the collection of “cleaner” data, generally providing fewer missing values (Fowler, 2014).

On the contrary, internet surveys limit sample responses to those with internet access, often feature a need for the collection and accuracy of comprehensive email address lists and may potentially offer challenges enlisting respondent cooperation (Fowler, 2014). Additionally, while the use of incentives such as entries into drawings for prizes may buoy response rates, it also may limit the cost effectiveness of online survey deployment (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

Survey Methodology and this Study

After evaluating these factors and considerations, it was determined by the researcher that using a survey as the method of data collection was most appropriate for this study for several reasons. First, this study sought responses from a large group of individuals – the student body’s attending universities that feature football teams that compete within the non-autonomous conferences of the (FBS). Survey research has been noted for its ability to gather sample data from diverse, large populations with relative ease (Taylor, 2017). As noted earlier, this method

has also been recognized as a mode of data collection which allows researchers to identify observations about a population and allows inferences to be drawn from those observations (Brick, 2011). In past research, the use of surveys to collect data has successfully obtained factual information about attitudes or beliefs across different groups and topics (Colton & Covert, 2007). The student body's at participating universities constitutes a diverse sample, so utilizing a survey research method of data collection allowed for the assessment of the potentially diverse belief systems regarding football game attendance and differing perceptions about football games that occur within these college campuses.

Second, this study also capitalizes on one of the aforementioned primary benefits of using survey research: the ability to assess trends of a population and to learn about individual attitudes, opinions and practices of that group (Creswell, 2008). Since the focus of this study is attendance behaviors of college students at football games, as well as an evaluation of various constraints that may impact these behaviors, a survey research design that allowed for information to be obtained regarding various factors impacting the attitudes and attendance patterns of these students was most appropriate. A survey research design also allows for responses to be collected from schools across a wide geographic area, allowing for comparisons to be made regarding subsections of the sample population across the United States.

Finally, a noted shortcoming of survey research is that the information collected is self-reported, often reporting on what people think instead of what they actually do (Creswell, 2008). However, this study may feature means by which to curb this perceived disadvantage. While specifics regarding instrumentation will be discussed later, the distributed survey began by asking respondents to report their attendance at the first two home games of the 2019 football season. There is no way to ensure the accuracy of the response selected, however the inclusion of

this question may have helped to represent the previous behaviors of the individuals in the sample, rather than simply their ideas or future intentions. The survey also included questions regarding various identified attendance constraints that are present in previous sport spectator research, as well as attempting to investigate the impact of additional, underexplored constraints, helped to evaluate for as many variables as possible. These choices were made in the hope that a challenge often associated with survey research can be turned into a strength for this study.

Each method of survey distribution explored in this section is the best choice for some studies; however, all distribution channels are not appropriate for all studies (Fowler, 2014). For the purposes of this study, online survey development via QuestionPro survey software followed by the distribution of the instrument via email was utilized in an attempt to manage costs, obtain data quickly, and obtain data from sources across the United States. QuestionPro software was made available to the researcher via the collection of a campus technology fee, but no additional financial costs were encountered, nor incentives provided with the distribution of this survey.

Sampling Technique

This study utilized a purposive, non-random sampling technique. Non-probability sampling involves administering a survey instrument to a population that is readily available (Skinner, Edwards, & Corbett, 2015). Purposive sampling is considered to be a useful approach when the researcher has knowledge or experience regarding the group being sampled, or when clear criteria are produced to defend and define the sample population (Skinner, Edwards & Corbett, 2015). Purposive sampling is also useful when the researcher is primarily interested in the information offered by individual respondents (Skinner, Edwards, & Corbett, 2015). To indicate clear criteria regarding sample selection for this study, the target population was students who attend non-autonomous universities that participate in NCAA FBS football

competition. The goal was to collect responses from various individuals who may hold different feelings about attending home football games on campus in an attempt to obtain a representative sample of university students and how they realize the effects of various leisure constraints.

Accessing this population featured challenges. Since this instrument was intended to be distributed online via a link included in an email, comprehensive email lists would have been needed to ensure access to as many potential respondents as possible. After some investigation, these lists containing student email addresses were not readily available to be provided to the general public. Therefore, it was the duty of the researcher to compile a list of institutions that represent the non-autonomous conferences in football to ensure an appropriate potential sample. Overall, 60 out of the 130 institutions currently competing in FBS football competition are members of a non-autonomous conference. Universities who participate in FBS football but do not fit this profile (i.e., FBS Independents and members of autonomous conferences) were initially eliminated from consideration to participate.

Secondly, the researcher sought access points within the university communities of non-autonomous FBS institutions. Athletic staff members were identified as the best source to grant access to the targeted population. Using the list of non-autonomous institutions that was previously compiled, members of athletic staffs with “marketing” or “tickets” in their listed job titles on their respective online athletic staff directories were targeted due to their perceived a) ability to distribute emails to the entirety of the student body on their respective campus’, and b) their potential to be interested in the data that would be collected from the completion of this study. Unlike the email addresses of the students, the email addresses of these athletic administrators are made publicly available on university athletic department staff directories and can be located with relative ease. Once these individuals were identified, contact was made via

email to explain the study and to attempt to enlist the help of these individuals with survey distribution across their campus’.

Finally, individuals within these athletic departments who were willing to assist with the completion of this study distributed the survey link provided by the researcher to the students at their respective universities. Athletic staff members who assisted did not have access to any of the data collected from their students until the study was completed. Data was collected via an email distributed by willing individuals to their student populations. The data collection window remained open from late-September to mid-November 2019.

Internet Surveys and the College Student Demographic

Many of the disadvantages noted by Fowler (2014) regarding internet surveys also can be circumvented as a result of the population being assessed in this study. As has been noted, this survey was issued to athletic administrators for campus-wide distribution via email lists of their student populations. The utilization of a source on campus to distribute the instrument eliminates a disadvantage requiring researcher access to comprehensive email address lists (Fowler, 2014). Additionally, Kvavik and Caruso (2005) found in their study that of 143,730 college students representing 63 institutions of higher education, 99.7% of respondents indicated their use of the internet to access their university email account. College campuses generally offer internet access to students on campus, but as of 2019, 77% of adults 18-29 also have home broadband internet access (Pew Research Center, 2019). This reduces the impact of this noted disadvantage regarding limiting the sample population to internet users, as a broad sample remained available in this case. The use of an online survey also allows for careful consideration by respondents regarding their answers (Fowler, 2014). As a result of all of these factors, survey methodology

and, in particular, online survey distribution, were selected as the best mode of data collection for this research study.

Instrumentation

There have been studies focused on student attendance constraints from which many questions for the utilized instrument have been derived (i.e., Koo, Hardin, & Shoffner, 2017; Simmons, Popp, McEvoy, & Howell, 2018). These studies will be focused upon in greater depth later. This section will outline the features of the instrument in the order in which they appeared in the survey that was distributed. Prior to questions regarding attendance constraints, there were two qualifying questions that ensured that respondents are an appropriate fit for this study. The first question asked respondents whether or not they are 18 years of age or older. The inclusion of question was necessary to facilitate Institutional Review Board approval for this study, as there are additional considerations that are necessary when studies include data obtained from minors. This question was followed by an additional qualifying question that asked respondents to indicate which of the first two home football dates at their institution they have attended thus far during the 2019 season. As a result of varied scheduling of home dates, the window for deployment of this survey varied slightly across the participating schools. Any respondent that indicated a 100% rate of attendance for home football games at that point of the season was not asked additional questions regarding constraints to their attendance and was instead directly routed out of the survey. These responses were eliminated from analysis since reported attendance at each home football game serves to indicate that despite a number of constraints that may exist in the decision-making process on whether or not to attend a home football game, those particular respondents had successfully negotiated these constraints. As a result, there was little need to evaluate the impact of constraints on the attendance habits of these individuals.

For those students who qualified to continue, questions addressing constraint areas asked respondents to measure their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements on a seven-point Likert scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

Addressing Intrapersonal Constraints

The first constraints to be addressed by the survey were intrapersonal constraints, or constraints described as limiters of participation as a result of individual preferences, attributes, or decisions (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Hurd & Forrester, 2006; Koo et al., 2017). According to Crawford et al. (1991) within their Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints (HMLC) as discussed in Chapter Two, intrapersonal constraints are considered most proximal to leisure participants, demonstrating the strongest influence on their decisions whether or not to participate in leisure activities. This determination was made since one's preference for an activity would not develop if intrapersonal constraints are present. In other words, intrapersonal constraints are often viewed as an antecedent state to leisure participation (Crawford et al., 1991; Koo et al., 2017) and may predispose individuals to identify leisurely pastimes with varying levels of appropriateness, interestingness, and availability that may either encourage or discourage participation (Hurd & Forrester, 2006). Examples of intrapersonal constraints include prior socialization into specific leisure activities and the availability of various leisure activities (Crawford & Godbey, 1987).

To evaluate for intrapersonal constraints, the survey featured a number of questions asking respondents to consider constraints that have been evaluated for in similar studies, such as their enjoyment (or lack thereof) of crowds, the presence of other activities that are more important to them than attending a football game, their own interest level in attending football

games, an evaluation of their own sport fanhood, and a question regarding the impact of their football knowledge base on their interest in attending.

Addressing Allegiance to Another Team

The next set of questions introduced a constraint to the body of literature regarding spectator attendance constraints: the impact of one's allegiance to another football team. In a sport context, allegiance can be explained as the development of an individual into a "loyal or committed fan of a sport or a team, resulting in influential attitudes that produce consistent and durable behavior" (Funk & James, 2001; p. 121). Funk and James (2001) identified allegiance in their PCM as the final phase of their continuum and the factor considered to be the most powerful.

This element was included since prior allegiance to another team may or may not act as a constraint on an individual's game attendance at the school which they attend. As an example of this, a student may choose to attend or watch a college football game on television featuring a team that they grew up cheering for, rather than attending games at the school that they attend. Non-autonomous athletic programs tend to be smaller in nature and may be less recognizable on a national scale, leading to the belief that knowledge or allegiance toward a larger, more prominent program may play a role as a constraint.

Questions in this category evaluated for respondents' fan allegiance to other schools, preferences for attending another university's football games, and preferences of watching another university's football team on television from home. The area of at-home viewing will be discussed in greater detail later, as it is one of the primary additions that this study sought to add to literature in this field and has been underexplored to this point in time.

Addressing Interpersonal Constraints

According to Crawford et al. (1991) and their HMLC, following intrapersonal constraints, individuals typically encounter interpersonal constraints when considering their participation in a leisure activity. As mentioned in Chapter Two, these constraints may act to limit leisure participation due to an individuals' relationship-related barriers such as a lack of interest in an activity from one's family or social group (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Simmons et al., 2018). This type of barrier may be realized, for example, if an individual is unable to locate a suitable group with whom to engage in a leisure activity.

Questions in this portion of the survey evaluated respondents for factors such as the ease with which they are able to find others to attend games with, the existence of different priorities among the respondents' friends and family, challenges regarding a respondents' ability to socialize at football games, and their dependence on sport as a means of social interaction.

Addressing Structural Constraints

The evaluation of interpersonal constraints was followed by a set of questions addressing structural constraints, as they are typically encountered after interpersonal constraints according to the HMLC (Crawford et al., 1991). As discussed in Chapter Two, structural constraints can be described as factors that create barriers to participation as a result of situational and environmental factors such as time and money (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Hurd & Forrester, 2006). Structural constraints are considered to be most susceptible to alleviation or diminishment by sport marketers and administrators (Trail & Kim, 2011), so responses to questions in this area may help athletic staffs at non-autonomous institutions to make changes that may positively impact student attendance in the future.

In previous student attendance research, Ridinger and Funk (2007) split structural constraints into three distinct areas: communication, travel, and time. This process was emulated by Koo et al. (2017) and has been adapted slightly for this study. A fourth subsection of structural constraints has been added, as well as the grouping of some concepts to create categories with different names. These four areas that were evaluated for are as follows: a) communication, or challenges associated with obtaining information about home football games, such as how to obtain tickets to home football games, and when and where the games are taking place; b) conflict, or other time commitments that may inhibit a student's ability to attend home football games such as commitments to family, schoolwork, or employment, issues fitting football game attendance into a schedule, and addressing the length of a home football game for its impact on attendance behaviors; c) commuting, or issues relating to traffic on game days, stadium accessibility, and parking; and d) in-stadium technology issues, or issues relating to speed and reliability of internet access in and around the stadium, as well as issues pertaining to posting to social media that occur as a result.

The inclusion of technology issues as its own section of structural constraints occurs as the result of recent technology usage trends that have emerged ("The Nielsen Total Audience Report", 2018). This was considered since, if reliable wi-fi in or around a stadium on a football game day is not available, smartphone access would also be limited, offering potential challenges for game spectators. While these factors have been identified in previous studies, the categorization of a set of structural constraints under the umbrella of in-stadium technology issues has not yet occurred in student attendance research and will appear as an additional structural constraint in the applicable leisure constraint model developed within this study.

Addressing At-home Viewing

Following this section, a set of questions addressed an additional category of constraints to attendance: the allure of the at-home viewing experience. As has been noted, there has been a growing concern among sport industry professionals regarding the shifting preferences of their fans to watch sporting events at home (Luker, 2012, Larkin, Fink, & Trail, 2015; Pritchard & Funk, 2006), including college students (Cowlshaw, 2018), warranting the inclusion of questions assessing this area. This could indicate a heightened propensity for this group to utilize home viewing options in lieu of attendance at home football games. These questions evaluated respondent preferences for watching football games as home, preferences for following football games via events posted online and to social media at home, the importance of the option to watch multiple games at once, and preferences for the social aspect of watching games at home with friends and family. These factors are most closely aligned with structural constraints, which justifies their inclusion in this area of the instrument.

Demographic Questions

The final section of the instrument included basic demographic questions. Questions in this section asked respondents to indicate their chosen gender identity, their ethnic identity, their academic classification (i.e. freshman, senior, graduate student), age, zip code, whether or not they live on campus, and their relationship status. These questions were asked in an attempt to better understand the position of those who have responded to the survey and to allow for the emergence of patterns or trends based on similarities observed within the data.

Research Questions

Upon construction of the survey instrument, research questions were created that could be adequately addressed by the study design. These questions were guided by the purpose statement outlined in Chapter One. The questions are as follows:

RQ1: What constraint areas impact student attendance at non-autonomous FBS home football games?

RQ2: How does a student's declared gender identity impact their attendance at non-autonomous FBS home football games?

RQ3: How does a student's academic classification (i.e. Freshman, Senior) impact their attendance at non-autonomous home football games?

RQ4: Do constraints impact students who attended one of their schools' first two football games during the 2019 season differently than those who did not attend either game?

RQ1 was selected due to the discussion of constraints, including the injection of some that were previously underexplored into the sport spectator attendance literature. The previously discussed HMLC created by Crawford et al. (1991) included three total areas of constraint: interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints, which are outlined in-depth in Chapter Two and Three. This model has been expanded upon before to include other constraint areas (see Koo et al., 2017, Ridinger & Funk, 2007) and, while not specifically measured for, the underexplored constraints featured in this study and in this research question have been included in similar studies (Simmons et al., 2017; 2018). In addition to previously identified constraints, this study sought to measure for in-stadium technology issues, the impact of the at-home viewing experience, and the impact of allegiance to another team. All factors were tested for their impact and their reliability in the forthcoming Chapter Four.

RQ2 was created to assess the gender demographic information gathered by this study. Demographic variables are considered important in determining what factors are most impactful regarding attendance and have been utilized when studying attendance at the “mid-major” level (Lovett, Bajaba, & Mesak, 2016; Snipes & Ingram, 2007), comparable to the non-autonomous level in this study. It has also been discussed that being a sports fan is a more important determinant of social status for males as opposed to females (End, Kretschmar, & Dietz-Uhler, 2004), which may indicate differences that warrant measurement. Related, gender differences have been evaluated for in previous studies specifically discussing motivations and constraints to college student game attendance (Koo & Hardin, 2008; Prichard et al., 2009; Swanson et al., 2003).

RQ3 addressed the various academic classes represented by the respondents of this survey. In multiple studies addressing constraints to student attendance, samples have been split based on academic class standing (Koo, et al., 2017; Simmons et al., 2018). Academic class advancement is also typically impacted by the age of a student. Age has not been as well-studied as gender in sport spectator literature (Lovett et al., 2016). Wann (1995) found few differences related to age in his study on sport fandom, however, Tobar (2006) indicated differences between college students and their parents in their levels of sport fandom. Additionally, Aiken and Sukhdial (2004) specifically discussed how age differences impact how fans identify with college football teams. This identification may impact how different college students realize the constraints that they encounter when considering game attendance.

Finally, RQ4 was included to measure for the impact of both prominent and underexplored constraints on individuals with different attendance habits. It was conceptualized that these constraints may present themselves differently for students who have attended one of

the first two games of the 2019 season than for students who had elected not to attend either game. Trail and James (2001) chose to administer their MSSC to individuals who held season tickets since their commitment to their team indicated the presence of behaviors that may lead to increased attendance. Conversely, Simmons et al. (2018) chose to administer their instrument that featured questions seeking information regarding numerous constraint areas to only students who were not in attendance during an on-campus football game. These two studies were considered when creating this question with the goal of establishing the differences between those students who have attended and those who have not in an attempt to measure constraints for both seemingly more loyal fans and those who may have no interest in football.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Instrument Deployment and Data Analysis

The survey instrument was deployed by members of the athletics staff on behalf of the researcher at four non-autonomous universities from September 2019 to November 2019. The universities that participated represented three of the five non-autonomous conferences. Potential respondents used the provided link to view the survey a total of 802 times and 229 complete responses were recorded.

Upon the completion of data collection, the data was exported from QuestionPro survey software to SPSS 26 for analysis. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with a principal component extraction and varimax rotation was conducted. The varimax rotation allowed for the distinct identification of each constraint (Schmidt & Watanbe, 2001). EFA was also selected as it has been used in a number of studies on motivations and constraints in the past (Huang & Hsu, 2009; Sao & Green, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Addressing RQ1

RQ1 addressed the impact of the constraints on student attendance. After conducting the EFA, seven factors for analysis were identified due to eigenvalues of 1.0 or greater. This differed from the first iteration of the adapted constraints model outlined in Chapter Two and located in the attached appendices, which indicated eight factors. Kaiser (1960) stated that “eigenvalues greater than 1 of the observed correlation matrices led to a number of factors corresponding almost invariably” (p. 145). Yong and Pierce (2013) also explained the importance of selecting the appropriate number of factors. A scree test was analyzed as an additional means to identify

the natural break in the curve to ensure the appropriate number of factors were identified for analysis. This scree test can be viewed as Figure 5 in the attached appendices.

In addition to the removal of one conceptualized factor, some questions from the survey instrument and their responses were dropped due to double loading, while questions that loaded in areas outside of those that were initially intended were retained, creating alterations within some of the conceptualized categories. After some reorganization, the remaining seven factors were also renamed with more meaningful titles relative to the overall content of their enclosed questions. These categories presented themselves in slight variation to the conceptualized categories and were named as follows: (1) lack of interest in football, (2) in-stadium technology issues, (3) at-home viewing, (4) communication, (5) allegiance to another team, (6) commuting, and (7) conflict. The corresponding factor values are visible in Table 1 and the adapted model created from these results can be found as Figure 4 in the attached appendices.

Lack of Interest in Football

Lack of interest in football included seven items from the survey and was originally intended to fit under the umbrella of intrapersonal constraints. Five of the seven questions that made up this area were from the group of questions that were originally intended to address intrapersonal constraints. This, as well as multiple loadings for the remaining two questions from this area, eliminated intrapersonal constraints from the adapted model constructed, replacing it with lack of interest in football.

However, questions assessing challenges socializing at football games as well as a lack of interest in attending football games among friends and family also fit within this category. These questions were originally conceptualized to fit within the category of interpersonal constraints,

so their fit within this category created a different conceptualization of interpersonal constraints than had been previously determined, altering its place in the adapted constraint model.

In-stadium Technology Issues

One of the underexplored constraints evaluated for in this study, in-stadium technology issues included four items from the survey instrument. Each of these four questions fell where they were intended. These questions were designed to measure the impact of structural, technological constraints related to ease of internet use and access to social media while attending home football games on campus. This area remains a fit under the umbrella of structural constraints to game attendance and presents as such in the adapted model.

At-home Viewing

As it was represented in the initial iteration of this study's conceptualized model (see Figure 3), at-home viewing was supported as its own constraint area as a result of the EFA, emerging as a factor. Four items were retained from the original six questions that were part of the initial survey design; two were dropped due to loading in multiple factor areas or due to redundancy of responses related to other questions. This area was intended to demonstrate how factors related to one's ability to watch and follow college football games from home may impact attendance at football games.

Communication

Communication about game information emerged as a factor and contained three items to assess the ease by which game times, ticket information, and the location of home football games could be obtained on campus. Communication remains a fit within the model under the umbrella of structural constraints, where it again presents within the adapted model.

Allegiance to Another Team

Another underexplored constraint area, allegiance to another team also emerged as a factor following the EFA. This category represented the impact of fanhood directed towards another college football team on game attendance at the university where a student is enrolled. Four questions were included to assess this area; three fit within this factor, while one question was dropped due to multiple loadings.

Commuting

Commuting also emerged as a factor. This category was intended to assess the ease by which students may travel to home football games and measured for constraints such as parking, traffic, and stadium accessibility. All three questions that were intended to fit this area did so and commuting continues to fit the adapted model as an area of structural constraint.

Conflict

Lastly, conflict emerged as a factor after the completion of the EFA. Questions in this area were designed to measure schedule fit, and the importance of other commitments to friends, family, and work relative to home football game attendance among students. Four questions were intended to fit this category; three remained, while one question was dropped due to multiple loadings. Conflict continues to fit the model as a subcategory of structural constraints.

Reliability

Next, the internal consistency of each of the seven factors identified was tested and examined using Cronbach's alpha. Each factor Cronbach's alpha value was .80 or higher; a threshold greater than the .70 that is generally accepted for instruments used in basic research (Nunnally, 1978.) This information is presented in Table 2 alongside the descriptive statistics associated with participant responses to questions within each factor. Overall, in-stadium

technology issues received the responses with the highest mean score ($M=4.37$, $SD=1.76$), while communication ($M=2.21$, $SD=1.61$) emerged as the least-impactful factor constraining student attendance.

Addressing RQ2

A MANOVA was conducted in an attempt to answer RQ2. The results represented multiple significant differences in the factors related to gender. The MANOVA was conducted in lieu of several t-tests in an attempt to reduce for Type I error, reducing the possibility of identifying false differences [$F(7,216)=5.845$, $p<.001$]. Individual ANOVA's were then run to determine which factors differed based on gender. The results indicate that there were significant differences in a lack of interest in football ($p=.033$), at-home viewing ($p<.001$) and allegiance to another team ($p<.001$) based on the self-identified gender of respondents. The results also demonstrated that males were significantly more impacted by the at-home viewing and allegiance to another team factors, while females were more impacted by possessing little interest in football. No other scales indicated significant gender differences. This information is provided in Table 3.

Addressing RQ3

Non-parametric correlation tests were conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the factors identified by the EFA and the academic class standing of respondents. There was a significant, positive relationship with a lack of interest in football games ($\rho=.141$, $p=.035$) and conflict ($\rho=.222$, $p=.001$). These correlations indicate that the closer a student is to the end of their academic career, the more likely they were to be impacted by having a lack of interest in football and to have issues committing the time to attend.

When separating by academic classification, there was also a significant, negative relationship when addressing in-stadium technology issues ($\rho = -.140$, $p = .036$). These results indicate that students who are newer to the college setting (i.e., Freshman, Sophomores) were more impacted by in-stadium technology issues than upper classmen or graduate students. No other relationships were identified from this analysis. The resulting information can be located in Table 4.

Addressing RQ4

Similar to the previous testing pertaining to gender, in an attempt to answer RQ4, an additional MANOVA was conducted that revealed significant differences between respondents who attended one home football game versus those who had attended none [$F(7,221) = 14.830$, $p < .001$]. Significant differences were indicated among all factors analyzed with the exception of allegiance to another team ($p = .937$). Respondents that attended zero games were significantly impacted by each of the factors identified with the exception of in-stadium technology issues. These results are reported in Table 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Chapter Overview

The overarching purpose of this study to determine what constraints are keeping college students who are attending non-autonomous FBS universities from attending home football games. The EFA identified seven constraint areas that were discussed in Chapter Four that will be referenced in greater detail in this chapter. The constraint categories identified were largely consistent with previous research (i.e., Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Koo et al., 2017; Ridinger & Funk, 2007). However, these results presented some subtle differences as well. This chapter will also further discuss results from the MANOVA analyses and non-parametric tests conducted that were conducted based on some demographic characteristics of survey respondents. These results create numerous implications and recommendations for individuals in ticketing and marketing roles in NCAA FBS athletic departments that may be of interest going forward and are outlined in this chapter.

An additional goal of this study was to contribute to the creation of a leisure constraints model that is applicable to spectator sport since this model is not generally used in this area (Crawford & Jackson, 2005; Jackson, 1997). A conceptualized model was generated in Chapter Two; a model reflective of this study's findings will be included in this section. This section will conclude with identifiable limitations of this study, as well as recommendations for future research opportunities.

A Discussion of the Factors in this Study

Lack of Interest in Football

Initially, a majority of the questions within this factor were intended to evaluate for intrapersonal constraints, with a separate area of the survey pertaining to interpersonal constraints. Intrapersonal constraints have been described as limiters of participation as the result of the presence of individual preferences, attributes, or decisions (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Hurd & Forrester, 2006; Koo, Hardin, & Shoffner, 2017), while interpersonal constraints exist as relationship-related barriers that may include a lack of interest from one's social group. (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Simmons, Popp, McEvoy & Howell, 2018). These are differences that caused a separation of these two constraint areas followed the initial iteration of the HMLC conceptualized by Crawford et al. (1991).

However, in this study, the EFA grouped together questions intended for both intrapersonal and interpersonal areas to create a factor indicating a general lack of interest in football. As a result, it can be interpreted that individual preferences may be greatly impacted by both attributes of each individual as well as by members of a student's social circle. Since college football games are often considered social events rather than sporting events (Koo et al., 2017), it is possible that these constraints could be evaluated by an individual as one in the same, rather than the previously identified negotiation of intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints sequentially.

Despite these two areas being combined by the EFA, it seems as though this factor featuring questions concerning intrapersonal constraints still belongs as antecedent to other constraint areas, similar to depictions in previous research (e.g., Crawford et al., 1991; Koo et al., 2017). This remains the case since a disinterest in football, whether as a result of internal

constraints or those placed upon an individual through social relationships, likely creates an aversion to attending football games that is unlikely to be overcome. While this study specifically measured for constraints and not for motivations, this may also emphasize the importance of social interaction as a motivator for those students who do regularly attend home football games.

The presented results also indicated that this factor category had a higher impact on two groups in particular. First, female students were significantly more likely to be impacted by a lack of interest in football. Additionally, levels of disinterest in football were higher for students who responded that they did not attend either of their school's first two home games of the 2019 season versus those who attended. These observations stand to reason: if a student possesses a lack of interest in football, it is likely that they would not attend any games, rather than attending one and then changing their attendance habits.

In-Stadium Technology Issues

This constraint factor has been discussed previously in similar studies but had yet to be treated as its own category. For example, Simmons et al. (2018) featured questions in their survey instrument that evaluated for the importance of internet at home football games. Wi-Fi service has been previously discussed as a must-have stadium amenity dating back to its first deployment by Stanford University in 2011, but also creates logistical challenges since these networks are consistently being utilized at increasing rates (Steinbach, 2013). However, despite the presence of Wi-Fi at an increasing number of college stadiums (Johnston, 2018), these results indicate that students are still experiencing connectivity issues and challenges accessing social media applications while attending games. The results of this study indicate that in-stadium technology issues featured the most impactful mean score across both male and female

respondents. Additionally, this constraint category measured as more impactful for individuals who attended one game versus those who had not attended. This is logical, as only students who have attended games can likely attest to the issues created by the lack of a stable Wi-Fi connection that provides lackluster social media connectivity.

Finally, the results also demonstrated that in-stadium technology issues were a greater constraint for “younger” students than for upper-classmen and graduate students. This demonstrates that perhaps younger individuals attending games possess more reliance on technology at sporting events than older patrons, despite being only a few years apart in age in traditional cases.

At-home Viewing

Similar to in-stadium technology issues, this constraint area had yet to be considered as its own constraint category but has been evaluated for in previous research. Simmons et al. (2018) created a survey instrument that considered the allure of watching games at home when surveying non-attendees at home football games, and at-home viewership has also been considered as a constraint by other similar studies (Guerra, 2015; Havard, Ryan, & McGee, 2017; NACMA, 2016). This area of constraint has gained additional steam in recent years since there has been evidence to suggest shifts in sport consumer preferences to watch games at home, rather than attending (Luker, 2012, Larkin, Fink, & Trail, 2015; Pritchard & Funk, 2006).

In this study, the allure of the at-home viewing experience was most impactful to two groups. The allure of watching games at home had a stronger impact on male respondents than females, as well as individuals who had attended zero of the first two home games versus those who had attended one. It is debatable why gender differences may impact the varied impact of this factor, but the inconsistencies concerning students who have attended versus those who have

not may indicate the development of a preference by certain college students to watch sporting events at home in controlled environments surrounded by friends rather than attending games.

Communication

Communication is an area of structural constraint that had been featured previously in other similar studies concerning student attendance constraints (Koo et al., 2017; Ridinger & Funk, 2007; Simmons et al., 2018). Specifically, Koo et al. (2017) indicated that communication-related issues regarding football games accounted for 11.64% of the variance when addressing five different areas of constraint.

In this study, it was made apparent in the results that communication exists as a constraint, but is, perhaps, less impactful than other areas. The results of this study indicated that, in large part, students knew how to acquire tickets to games, knew when the games were happening, and knew how to acquire information about the games. This can be observed by the communication factor consistently possessing the lowest mean score across gender, though there was an increase in mean scores when assessing individuals of varying attendance levels. Students who had not yet attended a game this season scored nearly one point higher in this factor than students who had attended one game. This may allude to information about football games on campus being readily available, but perhaps not equally across all groups on campus.

Allegiance to Another Team

Allegiance to another team was introduced to this study as an area of potential constraint that had not been measured for in a meaningful way in previous studies. This concept is prefaced by the idea that students attending non-autonomous schools may have already created allegiances other teams that inhibit game attendance at the school at which they are enrolled.

The results of this study signified a significant increase in allegiance to another team when analyzing male students as opposed to females. However, results pertaining to allegiance were similar whether students had attended a game this season or had not. Overall, allegiance to another team was somewhat impactful within this group of respondents, featuring the fifth-highest mean scores among seven constraint factors.

Commuting

Constraints related to commuting have been featured in previous studies (Koo et al., 2017; Ridinger & Funk, 2007; Simmons et al., 2018). For example, Koo et al. (2017) indicated that travel-related constraints such as traffic congestion and parking issues represented 15.87% of the variance among five different constraint areas. Similar areas were tested for within this study.

Across multiple demographics, constraints related to commuting were the second-most impactful on student attendance. While there were no significant differences among male or female respondents, the impact of constraints related to commuting to games was significantly higher and represented the greatest mean score for constraint among students who had not attended any home football games during this season.

Conflict

Conflicts, mostly related to time dedication, have been prominently featured in previous studies (Koo et. al., 2017; Simmons et al., 2018). Koo et al. (2017) indicated that questions pertaining to other time commitments, including those imposed by work-related responsibilities, represented 8.17% of the variance among five areas of constraint measured for.

While measuring for gender differences did not demonstrate significant changes in the impact of conflict constraints, the results did demonstrate that this constraint factor significantly

impacted students who had yet to attend a game this season relative to those who had been to a game. Also, the impact of conflict constraints was significantly more impactful on students who had reached a more advanced status in their academic careers (upperclassmen, graduate students) than those who were closer to the beginning.

A New Adaption to the Leisure Constraints Model

After considering the results of this study, a more applicable constraint model for attendance at athletic events was constructed that features changes from the conceptualized model referenced in Chapter Two. The model features the elimination of intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints, which have been combined to create the new factor “lack of interest in football.” However, the area within the model concerning interpersonal compatibility and coordination has remained intact. This was elected for since it could be argued there are interpersonal issues in play across a variety of factors. For example, communication of game times and ticket availability must be communicated from person-to-person, indicating the existence of interpersonal connection. Further, it was demonstrated by the EFA that preferences of friends and family factor in strongly to a lack of interest in football. As a final justification, the importance of internet connectivity and social media use within games was proven to be impactful: connectivity that is sought as a means by which to communicate with others.

The lack of interest in football factor will also remain antecedent to other constraint categories: if a student has internal or social constraints that have created feelings that represent themselves in a lack of interest in football, they are likely to have challenges negotiating to reach the next level of constraint. While the category names are different, this is similar to Jackson et al. (1993) who considered that constraints must be encountered and negotiated sequentially, and

that these initial aversions to participating in an activity would often prevent participation in that activity.

Additionally, motivations were not specifically measured for in this study but are important considerations when discussing aspects of consumer behavior. Therefore, motivations remain in the model and present in an antecedent state as they did in the first iteration of this adapted model, as well as in previous research.

In the revised model, allegiance to another team and at-home viewing are present as their own constraint category as determined by the EFA. The four structural constraint areas (communication, commuting, conflict, in-stadium technology issues) remained in a category together since it was not made apparent in what order these constraints individually present themselves to respondents. The revised model can be viewed in the appendix of this work in Figure 4.

Implications and Recommendations

This section features general suggestions for individuals occupying positions within athletic staffs at non-autonomous FBS institutions based on the results of this study. First, of the seven constraint factors emerging from the EFA, only two categories featured mean scores higher than the midpoint of the seven-point Likert scale – in-stadium technology issues and commuting. For the five factors that presented themselves below the midpoint, it remains important to consider that while they did not score highly, they were still constraints that impacted attendance rates at their home football games. Therefore, it is recommended that athletic administrators should not be contented by the status quo, and should be proactive in their attempts to further reduce the impact of any identified constraints (Koo et al., 2017). College sport is a multi-billion-dollar industry; developing habits among current college students to

attend games and to eventually purchase tickets and donate back to athletic programs should be a common goal among individuals working within these athletic departments.

The Seriousness of Attendance Reductions

The reductions of attendance at college sporting events in recent years should and must be taken seriously, especially among non-autonomous departments. Ohio State University, one of the most prominent autonomous athletic programs in the country, finished last year at a \$10 million deficit through their reporting, though the department has indicated that the actual deficit is less than \$1 million (Kaufman, 2020). In any case, the department reported a nearly 15% reduction in their football ticket revenues from 2018 to 2019 that reduced their income from in this area from \$59.4 million to \$50.6 million (Colombo, 2020). However, Ohio State also enjoys the rewards of a lucrative media rights contract featured by the Big Ten Conference and saw a 7% gain in this revenue stream from 2018, bringing in \$45.6 million for the department in 2019 (Colombo, 2020). The department also saw increases in revenue from royalties, licensing, advertising, sponsorships, and program, novelty, parking and concessions revenues, as well as a bump from their appearance in the College Football Playoff (Colombo, 2020). These additional revenue streams utilized by a university like Ohio State certainly has the ability to soften the blow of reductions in ticket revenue – revenue streams that are considerably smaller or unavailable to non-autonomous FBS institutions that make their reliance upon ticket revenue even more precarious.

To further represent the importance of ticket sales for non-autonomous schools, for the year 2018, ticket sales represented a median of \$2 million as a budget item for non-autonomous schools, while autonomous institutions earned a median of \$18.7 million from this source (“Finances of Intercollegiate Athletics Database,” n. d.). This is a considerable gap, but as

illustrated by Ohio State, autonomous institutions have other ways to recoup. Autonomous institutions earned an average of \$25.6 million in media rights for 2018 while non-autonomous schools earned less than \$1 million per school on the median (“Finances of Intercollegiate Athletics Database,” n. d.). It is unlikely that FOX or ESPN, major players in the current media rights landscape for college football, is planning to unexpectedly floor non-autonomous conferences with lucrative offers for multi-billion-dollar media rights contracts. As a result, though it represents a lower total dollar amount for non-autonomous departments, protecting and finding ways to increase football attendance may be the best hope for any level of future budget equity among non-autonomous athletic programs.

Is Football Worth It?

One consideration for athletic administrators may be to examine the value of keeping football programs on their campuses. Without lucrative revenue streams to capitalize on, non-autonomous athletic departments are often relegated to collecting what revenue they can from institutional support and student fees to operate. For example the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL), a non-autonomous member of the Sun Belt Conference, finished the most recent fiscal year with a \$4.6 million deficit in athletics despite receiving more financial support from its university’s general fund than any other school in the state of Louisiana (Potter, 2020). While ticket sales were reduced by 7.5% across all university sports, ULL revenues increased 0.11% from 2018 to 2019. However, expenses, a high percentage of which can be categorized to football, rose over 14% (Potter, 2020). Without \$18 million in support from the university fund (over 55% of their total budget) in support, ULL would have had a \$22.6 million deficit in last year’s budget.

Additionally, non-autonomous schools as a whole indicated nearly \$6 million on the median from student fees in 2018: fees paid directly to the university that support athletics (“Finances of Intercollegiate Athletics Database,” n. d.). However, it is difficult to say definitively that students are reaping a return on that investment since student attendance rates have trended on the decline nationwide despite the amount put forward (Cohen, 2013). Also, deficits such as those faced by ULL create challenges justifying the importance of having Division I sports on campus. When Ohio State athletics director Gene Smith was asked about the potential of a \$10 million reported deficit, he responded by saying “There’s no way I would be sitting here with 36 sports if we had a \$10 million deficit. It just wouldn’t happen. I’d be dropping sports and ticket prices would go up” (Kaufman, 2020). Statements like these from Smith demonstrate challenges for schools such as ULL, who would have had a deficit of over \$22 million if not for institutional support, to continue to support and fund major Division I athletic programs, including football. The University of New Mexico, a representative of the non-autonomous Mountain West Conference, has also faced such financial pressures, phasing out four sports (men’s soccer, men’s skiing, women’s skiing, women’s beach volleyball) in 2018 in an effort to continue to fund football (Virgen, 2019). The legislature of New Mexico has also applied pressure to encourage football be cut or moved to a lower division, driven in part by low game attendance (Virgen, 2019).

On the contrary, there exists a viewpoint that indicates that all college sport should be protected regardless of the financial struggles. After the conclusion of a 2013 NCAA study that indicated that only 20 NCAA athletic departments actually make money (the number has risen to 29 in 2018, according to Potter (2020)), NCAA Chief Financial Officer Kathleen McNeely warned that “if the trend of athletic spending outpacing institutional spending continues,

institutions will need to be able to justify that spending” (Herndon, 2014). However, McNeely continued to say that “the value that athletics brings to campus life, life-long connection to alumni, and enhancing diversity on campus are all important outcomes from athletic programs that need to be celebrated and shared” (Herndon, 2014).

Similarly, despite the financial shortfalls at New Mexico, athletic director Eddie Nunez has doubled-down on the importance of protecting Division I football, since its elimination would actually lead to lower revenues in the form of lost opportunities to play guarantee games, less media rights revenue, and less attractiveness of a lower-tier product leading to lower attendance figures and ticket sales (Virgen, 2019). Regardless of stance, it is imperative that athletics departments at non-autonomous institutions find ways to balance the budget and increase the value of having FBS football on campus. Increasing attendance from current students; students who will become season ticket holders and donors in the future, may be one way for them to begin clawing back. If the results of this study are considered by athletic administrators, it is possible that the situation could improve.

Managerial Recommendations

It is recommended that non-autonomous athletic departments attempt to increase desire of students to attend games. While it was represented as a constraint worthy of consideration among non-attendees, a lack of interest in football represented the second-lowest mean score among seven constraints identified by the EFA. This means that there are many students who are not attending football games for less proximal reasons than a sheer disinterest in football. The first step when students consider negotiating constraints to attend a game is to develop an actual desire within them to do so (Koo et al., 2017). Marketing and promotional strategies such as giveaways, all-you-can-eat ticket packages, concerts, or other short-term ways to drive

attendance may be serve as a band-aid, but a long-term plan should be considered to place an emphasis on improving the student experience when attending football games. This may also serve to curb issues related to at-home viewing preferences.

Providing additional value for attending games and establishing connections between students and athletic programs may help get students to leave their homes and pursue game attendance. Some suggestions include the development of programs involving community youth and increasing accessibility to student-athletes and coaches on campus. Establishing a relationship with younger individuals at the grass roots level in the community may encourage the development of future students or fans of athletics, and increased accessibility could increase the social connection to athletic teams and players among members of the campus community.

Secondly, it seems as though universities and their athletics staffs should place an emphasis on improving internet connectivity at their stadiums on game day. Issues with in-stadium technology represented the highest mean score among students represented and was particularly impactful among younger students. Students who will make up incoming freshman classes in the future will come from a background more similar to that of current freshman than current seniors, so identifying this trend now and making improvements may be instrumental in improving the in-stadium experience for current and future students. This study is not a technical report on how to modernize Wi-Fi accommodations at football stadiums, but those working in athletics positions should inquire about how to improve this as an amenity to their facilities.

Thirdly, athletic administrators should consider issues that impact the ability of students and fans to commute to games. It is understood that issues pertaining to traffic, parking, and stadium accessibility are not new issues to college sporting events, as college campuses are generally not equipped to host tens, if not hundreds of thousands of people in addition to their

typical campus community (Pate, Bemiller, & Hardin, 2010). Students are also likely lowest on the totem pole concerning issues commuting to games. However, following the suggestions of Koo et al. (2017), student-only parking areas or exclusive student transportation from off-campus areas or lots may be one way to overcome this structural constraint.

Fourthly, the institutions featured in this study should be commended on their ability to communicate game details with their students. However, as was noted earlier, students who had not attended any games this year had a nearly one-point increase in mean score over those who had attended related to communication. Athletics staffs should seek areas on campus that may not have been previously identified to post game information, perhaps through unconventional social media accounts not directly related to athletics or through online learning management systems such as Blackboard or Canvas. Further, this study seconds the position of Koo et al. (2017) that an athletics presence at functions such as freshman orientations may foster opportunities for early promotion and may generate interest. This may also serve to quell allegiances that incoming students may have to other athletic teams and reduce the impact of those constraints. Continued promotion of athletic events and interactions with these students may be more likely to encourage them to adopt fanhood for their new school's teams.

Finally, the issue of time conflict creates challenges that intersect with other areas of constraint. College football games by nature are three-to-four-hour endeavors. If there are challenges related to commuting, that timeline may be extended even further. Therefore, as was mentioned previously, it is imperative that athletic departments offer as much value as possible to match a student's time commitment. Koo et. al (2017) suggested opportunities for students to attend closed scrimmages, facilitation of their travel arrangements for games, season ticket and group seating options, and meet-and-greet opportunities with players and coaches may be ways

to increase the perceived value of attending that would not be available to individuals who chose to watch a game from home.

Final Recommendations and the PCM

Lastly, while the data collection within this study did not pertain specifically to emotional attachment, it is recommended that athletic administrators familiarize themselves with the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) created by Funk and James (2001). This model is viewable as Figure 1 in the attached appendix. Allegiance is the highest form of connection that can be formed by a fan on the four-level scale, but it seems as though students are struggling to negotiate their way beyond level one (awareness) or level two (attraction). The universities involved in this study have seemingly done a good job ensuring access to information about their games on their campuses, which will help students reach level one. However, students seem to struggle to develop the development of personal needs necessary to climb to level three (attachment), or the feelings of identification that must occur to reach level four (allegiance).

This may also indicate a societal issue. The lack of allegiance-forming attributes among individuals of this age group may also have lowered responses as it pertained to allegiance to another team – if one has not acquired or is not interested in acquiring what is necessary to reach allegiance for the athletic programs at the school which they attend, perhaps they are not interested in reaching that status, in general. Athletic administrators should, in any case, familiarize themselves with the model and develop initiatives in an attempt to move their students along the continuum.

Limitations & Future Research

Several limitations were identified both during and at the conclusion of this study that may influence future research.. First, a more representative sample would have been ideal. An

ideal sample would have included participation from additional non-autonomous FBS institutions, as well as a greater representation of students at schools that elected to participate. The results of this study are made up of the thoughts of 229 students across four such institutions; there are 65 universities that represent non-autonomous conferences in football featuring hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of students across their campuses. While each of the 65 schools were contacted, many did not participate for a number of reasons – reasons that may themselves be a worthy area of further study. However, as a result, this study addressed a relatively small cross-section of these individuals but provides a starting point for future research.

Additionally, this study addressed students who did not attend at least one of their school's first two home games of the 2019 season. If this survey had been deployed after the completion of more home games, it may have yielded different, potentially more representative results. For example, it is certainly within the realm of possibility that surveying after additional home games would have yielded more students who had been forced to miss games for the reasons measured for in this study. Several hundred responses were dropped from the results of this study prior to analysis from students that had attended both games that had taken place at the point of data collection – had that number been four or five games, it is very possible that a larger sample of students who had not attended all games would have been obtainable. For these reasons, it is recommended for future research that data be collected after a bigger portion of each teams' home schedule.

Future research may also seek to create a more exhaustive list of constraints. It would be short-sided to claim that this study encapsulated any possible constraint that may have impacted a college student from attending a college football game. Depending on the institution and their

ticket acquisition procedures, students may have simply forgotten to apply for tickets for the first two home games or could be impacted by other situational factors such as weather conditions.

Also, while this study demonstrated that each area of constraint measured for had at least some impact on student football attendance, no factor produced a mean score higher than 4.37 (in-stadium technology issues) on a seven-point Likert scale. This study utilized considerations from numerous similar instruments and studies to create a thorough list of constraints and perhaps each of these factors had an impact on college students in combination with one another, but without a higher mean score in any given constraint area, it is difficult to say that any of these factors alone have the impact to constrain students to the point of consistent non-attendance at football games.

An additional piece that could have minimized these limitations may have been the use of an open-ended, qualitative question that could have asked students to inform about any areas of constraint that this study did not measure for. This would not only help to potentially compile a more exhaustive list of constraints but could have raised awareness of other potential factors that may have been worthy of future research.

Conclusion

Overall, the information provided in this study and other similar studies demonstrates attendance at college football games, specifically among students, as an important area to further research. Due to a system that will likely continue to produce disadvantaged athletic programs such as those at the non-autonomous FBS level, it will be important to continue to keep an eye on these universities and the attractiveness of their football programs, especially considering the heavy media and research coverage of their autonomous counterparts. Finally, given the budgetary constraints of these institutions, the considerations outlined here may be instrumental

to creating a system where current and future student attendance can be supplemented, thus leading to a more certain economic future for major college athletics at non-autonomous FBS institutions.

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APPENDIX

1. Are you at least 18 year of age?
A: Yes/No; responses of “No” will be directed out of the survey
2. Please indicate which home football games you have attended during THIS season:
A: Only game 1, Only game 2, Only game 3, I have attended 2 of the 3 home games this season, I have attended all home football games so far this season, I have not attended any home football games this season; answers of “I have attended all home football games so far this season” will be sent directly to the demographic section. Question will be adapted to feature opponents and number of home games played for participating schools.

The following sections will ask you to consider your agreement of disagreement with a number of personal preferences that may impact your interest in attending home football games at your school. Please use the following scale to respond:

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Intrapersonal Constraints

3. I do not enjoy crowds
4. There are other activities I would rather be doing that attending a home football game.
5. I have no interest in attending football games.
6. I am not a sports fan.
7. I do not know enough about the game of football to enjoy attending a game.

Allegiance to Another Team

8. I am a fan of a football team at another university.
9. I would prefer to attend a football game being played by a team from another university.
10. I would prefer to watch another college team on TV than the team at the university I attend.

Interpersonal Constraints

11. It is difficult for me to find people to attend games with me.
12. Activities other than home football games take priority with my friends and family.
13. My friends and family do not enjoy going to home football games.
14. I find it challenging to socialize at a home football game.
15. I depend on sports for social interaction.

Structural Constraints - Communication

16. I am not sure where to find information about football games on campus.
17. I am not sure how to get tickets to football games on campus.
18. I am unaware of when football games are being played on campus.

Structural Constraints - Conflict

19. I have commitments to my family that keep me from attending football games.
20. I have work-related commitments that keep me from attending football games.
21. Football games do not fit into my schedule.
22. The time commitment for attending a football game is too long.

Structural Constraints - Travel

23. Traffic is too congested on campus on game days.

- 24. The stadium is not easily accessible on game days.
- 25. Parking on or around campus is too much trouble on game days.

Structural Constraints - Technology

- 26. Internet access is unreliable at home football games.
- 27. Internet access is slow at home football games.
- 28. I am unable to access the Internet at the stadium on football game days.
- 29. It is difficult to post to social media from the stadium during home football games.

At-home Viewing

- 30. I would rather watch football games at home.
- 31. I can follow game updates on social media and online at home.
- 32. I prefer to follow game updates on social media and online at home
- 33. I want the option to watch other college football games.
- 34. I would rather watch multiple games from my home.
- 35. I like the social aspect of watching games at home with my family and friends.

Thank you for your responses thus far! The following questions will ask you to provide basic demographic information about yourself.
--

- 36. Please select your gender identity:
A: Male/Female/Self-Identify (w/textbox), Prefer not to answer
- 37. Please indicate your ethnic identity:
A: Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, Multiethnic, Native American/American Indian, White, Self-identify (w/textbox), Prefer not to answer
- 38. Please select your academic classification:
A: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate student, Prefer not to answer
- 39. What is your age? (text entry)
- 40. What is your zip code? (text entry)
- 41. Do you live on campus?
A: Yes, No
- 42. What is your relationship status?
A: Single, In a relationship, Engaged, Married, Prefer not to answer

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your response has been recorded.

Appendix B: IRB Approval



August 30, 2019

John Magliocca
UTK - Coll of Education, Hlth, & Human - Kinesiology Recreation & Sport Studies

Re: UTK IRB-19-05382-XM

Study Title: Examining Student Attendance Constraints at NCAA Non-Autonomous Football Games

Dear John Magliocca:

The Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) reviewed your application for the above referenced project and determined that your application is eligible for **exempt** review under 45 CFR 46.101. Your application has been determined to comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects. This letter constitutes full approval of your application (Version 1.0).

Approval Information:

- 50,000 participants
- XM cat 2
- Online consent statement

Approved Documents:

- App v1.0
- Initial Contact Email to Athletic Administrators v1.0
- Survey Consent Form v1.0-void
- Diss_Survey_Draft 1.0 (this contains ifc statement and survey)

Institutional Review Board | Office of Research & Engagement
1534 White Avenue Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
865-974-7697 865-974-7400 fax irb.utk.edu

BIG ORANGE. BIG IDEAS.

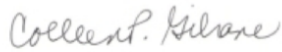
Flagship Campus of the University of Tennessee System

The documents above have been stamped and IRB approved on 8/30/2019.

In the event that volunteers are to be recruited using solicitation materials, such as brochures, posters, web-based advertisements, etc., these materials must receive prior approval of the IRB.

Any alterations (revisions) in the protocol must be promptly submitted to and approved by the UTK Institutional Review Board prior to implementation of these revisions. You have individual responsibility for reporting to the Board in the event of unanticipated or serious adverse events and subject deaths.

Sincerely,



Colleen P. Gilrane, Ph.D.
Chair

Institutional Review Board | Office of Research & Engagement
1534 White Avenue Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
865-974-7697 865-974-7400 fax irb.utk.edu

BIG ORANGE. BIG IDEAS.

Flagship Campus of the University of Tennessee System 

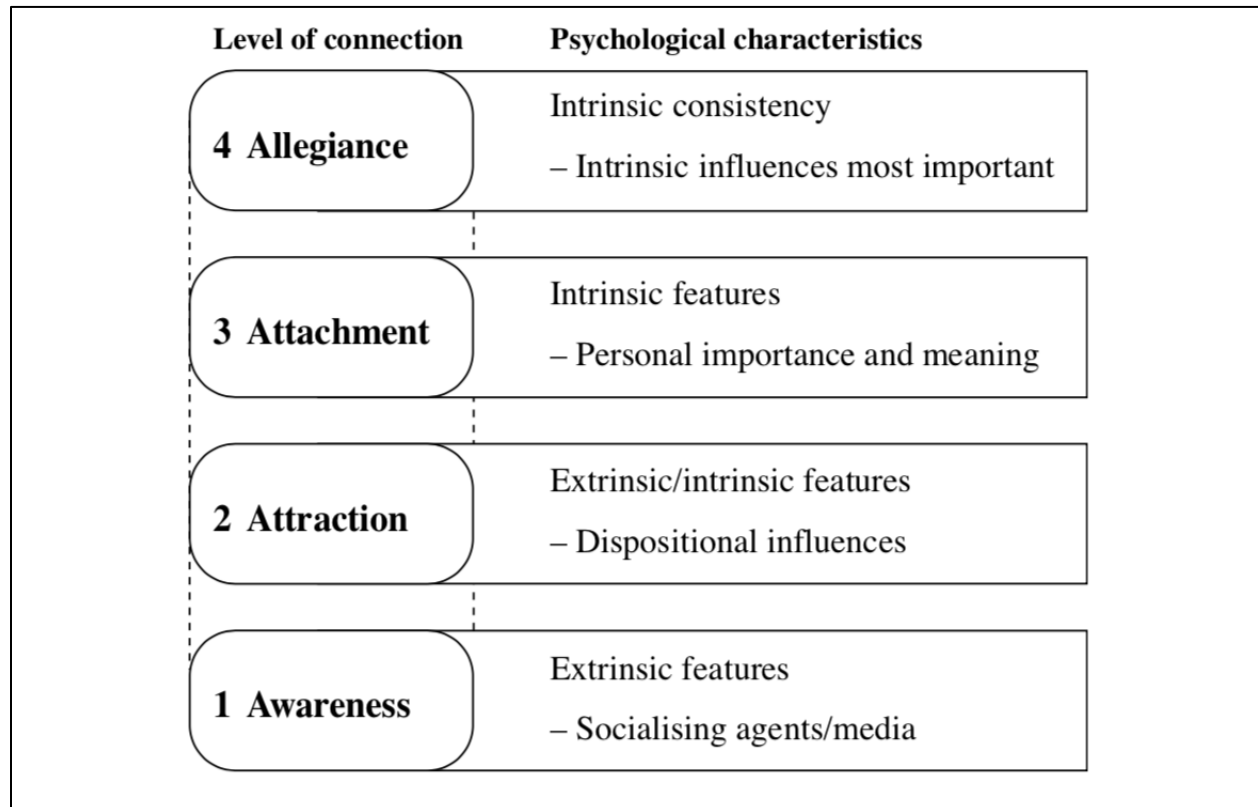


Figure 1. The Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) (Funk & James, 2001).

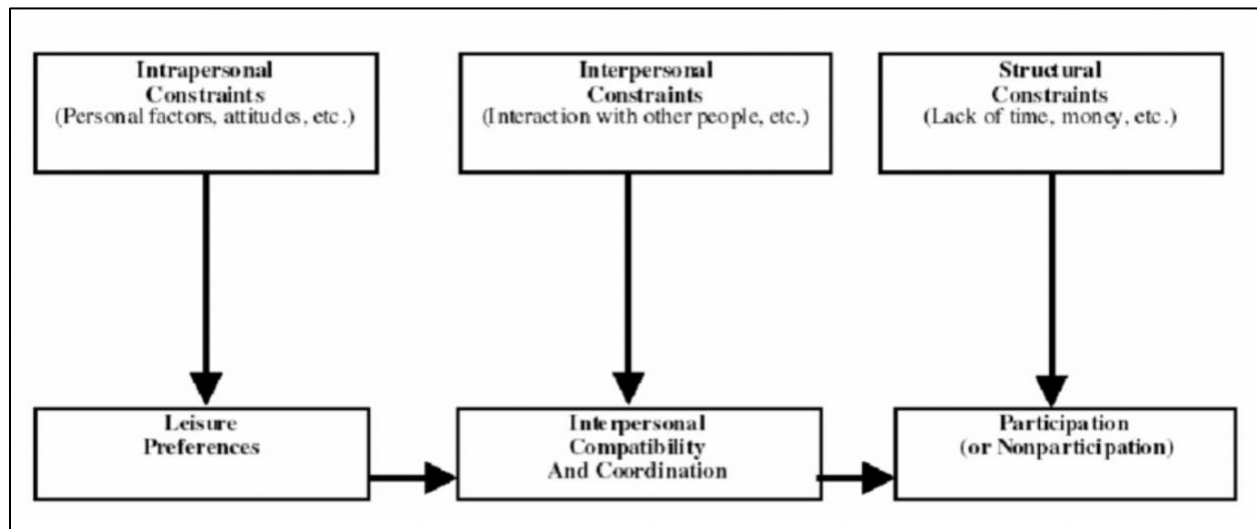


Figure 2. Crawford et al. (1991) Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints

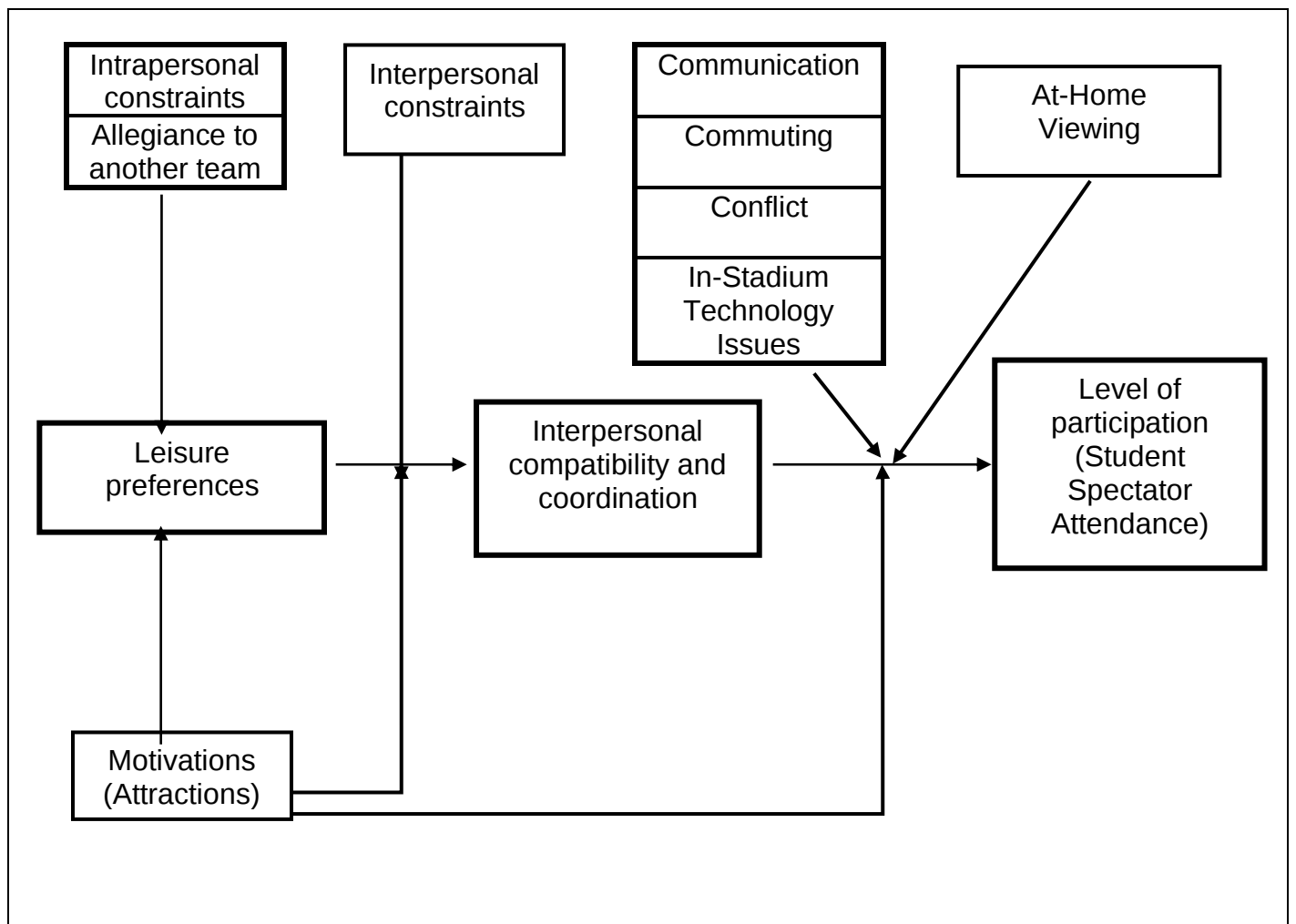


Figure 3. Leisure constraints model for sport spectator attendance (Pre-analysis)

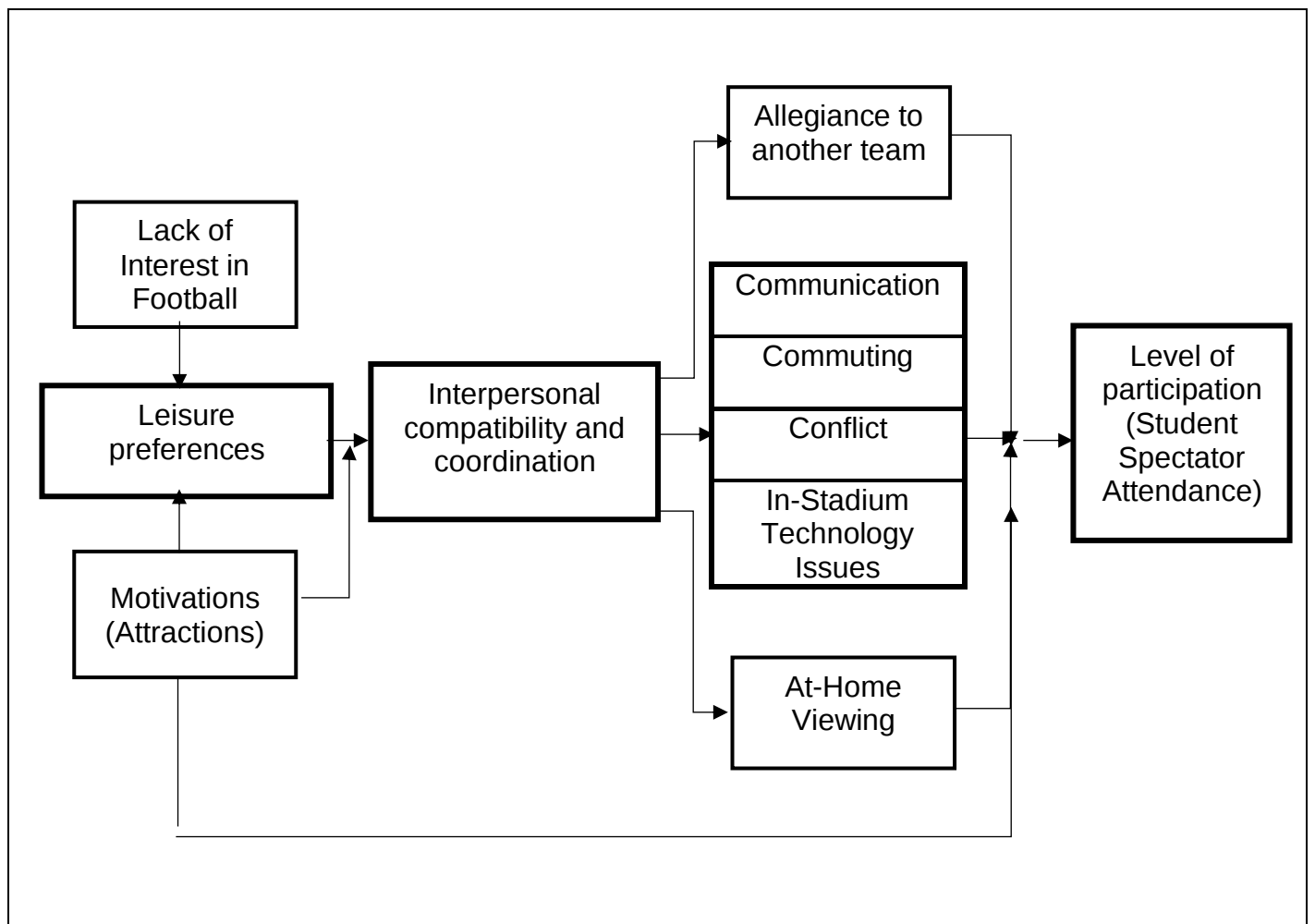


Figure 4. Leisure constraints model for sport spectator attendance (Post-analysis)

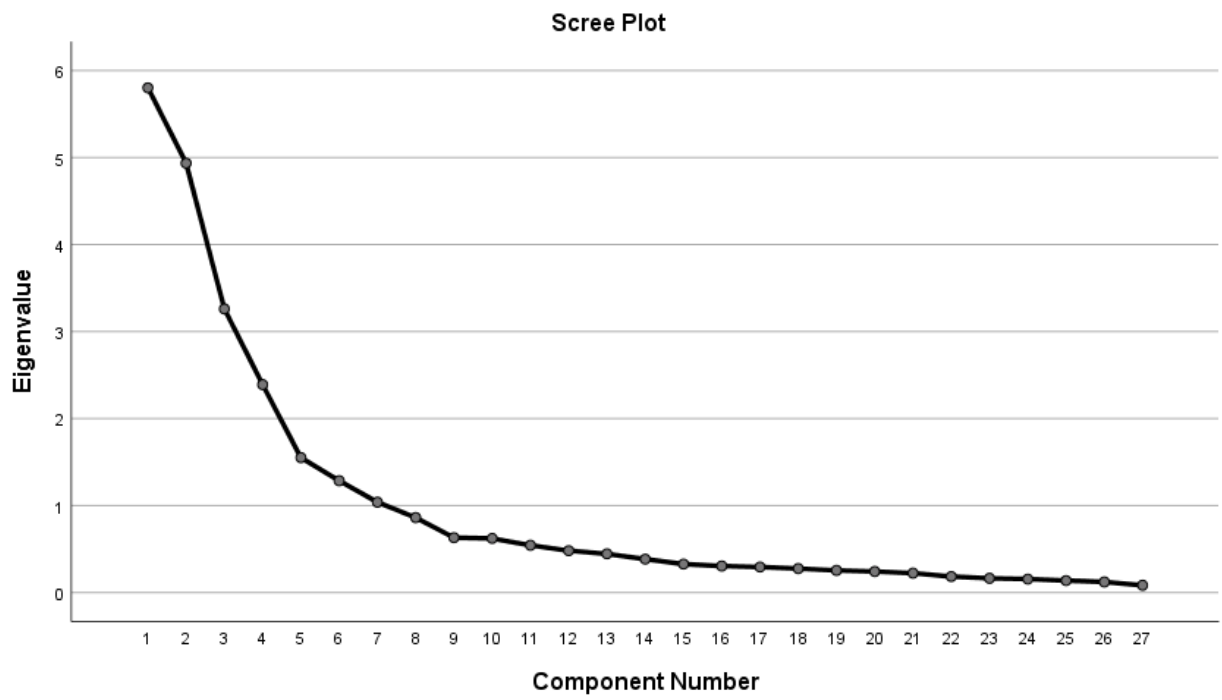


Figure 5. Factor Eigenvalues

Table 1. Factor loadings for EFA of Constraints to Student Attendance

Factor loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Constraints to Student Attendance

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Lack of Interest in Football							
<i>I have no interest in attending home football games.</i>	.884						
<i>I am not a sports fan.</i>	.784						
<i>There are other activities I would rather be doing than attending a home football game.</i>	.779						
<i>My family and friends do not enjoy attending home football games.</i>	.696						
<i>I do not enjoy crowds.</i>	.694						
<i>I do not know enough about football to enjoy attending a game.</i>	.693						
<i>I find it challenging to socialize at a home football game.</i>	.536						
2 In-Stadium Technology Issues							
<i>Internet access is unreliable at home football games.</i>		.932					
<i>I am unable to access the internet at the stadium on gamedays.</i>		.927					
<i>Internet access is slow at home football games.</i>		.925					
<i>It is difficult to post to social media from the stadium on game days.</i>		.882					
3 At-home Viewing							
<i>I would rather watch football games at home.</i>			.806				
<i>I would rather watch multiple games from home.</i>			.745				
<i>I like the social aspects of watching at home with my friends and family.</i>			.722				

Table 1 continued

<i>I prefer to follow game updates on social media or online at home.</i>	.721
4 Communication	
<i>I am not sure where to find information about football games on campus.</i>	.879
<i>I am not sure how to get tickets to football games on campus.</i>	.849
<i>I am unaware of when football games are being played on campus.</i>	.817
5 Allegiance to Another Team	
<i>I would prefer to attend a football game being played by a team from another university.</i>	.880
<i>I would prefer to watch another college team on TV than the team at the university that I attend.</i>	.817
<i>I am a fan of a football team at another university.</i>	.776
6 Commuting	
<i>Parking on or around campus is too much trouble on game days.</i>	.874
<i>Traffic is too congested on campus on game days.</i>	.812
<i>The stadium is not easily accessible on game days.</i>	.681
7 Conflict	
<i>I have work-related commitments that keep me from attending football games.</i>	.836
<i>I have commitments to my family that keep me from attending football games.</i>	.823
<i>Football games do not fit into my schedule.</i>	.763

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.^a

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Responses

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Responses

Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
In-stadium technology issues	4.3726	1.75633	.949
Commuting	4.0378	1.81732	.850
At-home viewing	3.4694	1.57075	.805
Conflict	3.2737	1.73790	.809
Allegiance to another team	3.1164	2.06734	.887
Lack of interest in football	2.9734	1.48288	.871
Communication	2.2140	1.60813	.871

Table 3. Factor Means by Gender

Table 3*Scale Means by Gender*

Factor	Male Students (n=83)		Female Students (n=141)		p-value
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Communication	2.1647	1.42031	2.2340	1.68313	.753
Lack of Interest in Football	2.6888	1.37481	3.1258	1.52749	.033
In-stadium technology issues	4.3574	1.67703	4.3712	1.80480	.955
At-home Viewing	4.1205	1.48999	3.0887	1.50361	.000
Commuting	3.7992	1.71154	4.1797	1.86638	.130
Conflict	3.1084	1.74849	3.3948	1.73690	.236
Allegiance to another Team	3.8956	2.18577	2.6619	1.87464	.000

Table 4. Correlations between Scales and Academic Class

Table 4

Correlations between Scales and Academic Class

	Factor	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Spearman's rho	Communication	.020	.766	224
	Lack of interest in football	.141	.035	224
	In-stadium technology issues	-.140	.036	224
	At-home viewing	.068	.309	224
	Commuting	.014	.837	224
	Conflict	.222	.001	224
	Allegiance to another team	-.041	.539	224

Table 5. Factor Means by Game Attendance

Table 5

Scale Means by Game Attendance

Factor	1 game (n=128)		Zero games (n=101)		p-value
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Communication	1.8932	1.36250	2.6205	1.80002	.001
Lack of interest in football	2.4766	1.19322	3.6030	1.57769	.000
In-stadium technology issues	4.7292	1.84042	3.9208	1.53706	.000
At-home viewing	3.1543	1.40378	3.8688	1.68360	.001
Commuting	3.7891	1.92550	4.3531	1.62537	.019
Conflict	2.7813	1.49916	3.8977	1.82437	.000
Allegiance to another team	3.1068	2.02432	3.1287	2.13071	.937

VITA

John Magliocca was born and raised in Rochester, NY. John graduated from Churchville-Chili High School in 2005 before attending West Virginia University, earning a Bachelor's of Multidisciplinary Studies degree in 2009. Upon graduation, John worked for Branch Banking and Trust Company in Morgantown, WV from 2010 to 2015. It was John's affinity for sport that pulled him from the banking industry and back to academia, as he chose to pursue a graduate degree in Sport Management from Niagara University in Lewiston, NY. At Niagara, John was given the opportunity to work as a graduate assistant in the Niagara athletic department, taking on the role of External Relations Coordinator. During this time, John also enjoyed an internship opportunity with the Buffalo Bisons baseball club. Upon completion of his master's degree requirements, John left western New York to pursue a doctoral degree in Kinesiology and Sport Studies from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.